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Coping with Text Complexity in the Disciplines: Vulnerable Readers' Close Reading Practices

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Coping with Text Complexity in the Disciplines: Vulnerable Readers' Close Reading Practices

by

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Abstract

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Early reactions suggest that secondary teachers need support implementing the Common Core State Standards, specifically when teaching close reading strategies with complex disciplinary texts to vulnerable readers. This mixed-methods study conducted in a formative experiment paradigm (Reinking & Bradley, 2008) aimed to provide explanatory theories generated by applying a grounded theory approach to data analysis. An ethnographic case study design framed the grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and the formative experiment. I wanted to understand how two teachers adjusted their curriculum and instruction to create a more rigorous experience for vulnerable readers. I also sought to explore how such an approach affected the academic identities of these students. Teacher surveys, teacher interviews, student interviews, student surveys, student work, reading assessments, classroom observations, and teacher planning sessions provided evidence about how readers in two classrooms make sense of text and the strategies that support their comprehension and engagement during two curricular units that involve close reading of disciplinary texts.

The units were used by students in two Special Day English classrooms at two different school sites and were co-designed by each high school teacher and myself. Reflections upon the first curricular unit informed the planning for the second curricular unit in each class. Also, I followed three students into at least one of their other disciplinary classes to understand their experiences with discipline-specific literacy instruction, both in the language arts and their disciplinary classes. Finally, I interviewed students about their in-school and out-of-school literacy practices, again to look for evidence of transfer from the units to their everyday repertoire of practices.

Results indicate that both teachers, as they implemented the collaboratively planned lessons, asked predominantly open-ended questions that expected students to include textual evidence in their responses and did not have predetermined answers. This behavior was contrary to what I expected at the beginning of my study because I expected teachers might have predetermined answers. When responding to each teacher's instruction, students referenced the text in supporting the claims they developed on their own. In both classrooms, some of the students' academic identities improved during the study. All students reported rich relationships with text outside of school; however, only some students experienced success with reading complex

disciplinary text in their English class. Overall findings suggest a positive effect of open-ended tasks that require students reference both the text and the knowledge that they bring to the task in forming arguments and applying understandings gained while reading. Future studies including a greater number of teachers from a range of disciplines who implement instruction with more students over a longer period of time would be beneficial in developing a more robust database about the power and influence of close reading practices.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; National Governors Association for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010) has changed classroom literacy instruction across the United States. A few key shifts include: (a) reading increasingly complex text throughout the K-12 grade span; (b) using evidence to support arguments and explanations when reading both literary and nonfiction texts; (c) reading content-rich nonfiction to build knowledge; and (d) emphasizing close reading (NGA & CCSSO, 2010) in which ideas and authorial tools are unmasked, analyzed, and evaluated. How teachers and students respond to these demands necessitates greater attention.

Decisions about complex text are especially important given that the CCSS constitute the first policy document to highlight increased capacity to deal with complex texts as its own standard, including quantitatively indexed goals for certain points in students' time in school (Pearson & Hiebert, 2014). Although some of the changes to the CCSS arose from concern that students were not reading enough complex text, the research basis for this argument and the key shifts to the CCSS remain unclear (Applebee, 2013; Gamson, Lu, & Eckert, 2013; Pearson, 2013; Pearson & Hiebert, 2014; Smith, Appleman, & Wilhelm, 2014).

In addition to the emphasis on text complexity, scholars are concerned about the approach to close reading that is proposed by the CCSS standards (Applebee, 2013; Beers, 2013; Catterson & Pearson, 2017; Compton-Lilly, 2013). Close reading has been defined as intentional or thoughtful reading with special emphasis on text (Catterson & Pearson, 2017 citing Lentricchia & DuBois, 2003). The authors of the standards included a focus on close reading because they wanted students to critically engage with text; however, their recommendations for instruction minimize the role of readers' background knowledge and culture and the sociocultural contexts in which texts are written (Catterson & Pearson, 2017). If the Revised Publisher's Criteria for the Common Core State Standards (RPC; Coleman & Pimentel, 2012)–a widely read curriculum guide that accompanies the standards–are followed strictly, scholars worry that teachers and curriculum leaders will "limit what thoughtful textual interrogation can accomplish in adolescents' lives" (Catterson & Pearson, 2017, p. 458). The type of close reading that is proposed by the CCSS is reminiscent of an earlier approach to reading that was popular during the New Criticism literary movement in the early to mid-20th century (Catterson & Pearson, 2017). This theory posited that authorial background and the historical context in which the text was written were not relevant to interpretation because they distracted from valuing the text's inherent meaning (Brooks, 1979 cited by Catterson & Pearson, 2017). The RPC's insistence that meaning from reading can be gleaned simply by answering text-dependent questions (without bringing to bear information from outside the reading) is unsubstantiated and in need of greater attention (Catterson & Pearson, 2017).

In addition to these perplexing recommendations, teachers need to grapple with the incompleteness of the CCSS when crafting their curriculum. Indeed, standards, as consequential and constraining as they can be, do not determine "what to teach, how to teach, what to expect from students, how those expectations progressively increase across years of schooling, and how to assess where students are relative to expectations" (Goldman et al., 2016, p. 2). Even though standards can set productive goals, meeting the goals necessitates design, implementation, and evaluation of instructional principles, strategies, materials, and assessments that are aligned with the standards (Goldman, et al., 2016). Additionally, because adolescent readers have their own unique needs, it is all the more important that instruction is focused and well matched.

Indeed, adolescent literacy is both a field of study and line of research that has been in the spotlight in recent years. The International Reading Association's position statement on Adolescent Reading (2013) aims to capture some of the key perceived "needs" in terms of academic literacy instruction and experiences for students ages 12-18:

1. Content area teachers who provide instruction in the multiple literacy strategies needed to meet the demands of the specific discipline.
2. A culture of literacy in their schools and a systematic and comprehensive programmatic approach to increasing literacy achievement.
3. Access to and instruction with multimodal, multiple texts.
4. Differentiated literacy instruction specific to their individual needs and opportunities to participate in oral communication when they engage in literacy activities.
5. Opportunities to use literacy in the pursuit of civic engagement and assessments that highlight their strengths and challenges.

Despite the ubiquity of these demands in the classroom, current reading scholarship has gaps in terms of how teachers exactly support their students and vulnerable readers in particular. Vulnerable readers is a term adopted from Bomer (1999) (cited by Jaeger, 2015) to convey the complexity of issues that students may encounter when reading and the surrounding "literacy ecology," such as poorly matched texts or inauthentic tasks. Students who have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and are in Special Day classrooms or "classes that serve pupils with severe disabilities whose more intensive educational needs cannot be met in regular classrooms… typically located on a regular school campus" (Ehlers, 2013) may also be vulnerable readers and the research about close reading complex disciplinary texts with this population of students is particularly lacking. When adolescents come to school with a range of needs in the classroom, teachers utilize a set of tools from their teaching repertoire to engage students and build their skills; nevertheless, further research is needed to understand the most potent practices that support effective close reading instruction.

Given the pressures to hold all students accountable to emerging higher standards, I undertook the current study, an up-close examination of the attempts of two teachers to incorporate these higher standards into their teaching practices with special education students, all of whom had IEPs with diagnosed learning disabilities. By doing so, this would allow these students to participate in a challenging curriculum and reshape their academic identities in more positive ways. Two general questions (which will be unpacked more fully in Chapter 2) guided this inquiry. First, how do teachers adjust their curricular (e.g., the texts and tasks they assign) and pedagogical (in the moment pedagogical moves with their classes and individual students) actions as teachers to bring a more rigorous experience to students who struggle to meet even less rigorous school demands? Second, how does such an experience affect the academic identities of these vulnerable students, especially if they make a sincere effort to meet these demands? My questions are framed this way because some students who receive special education services have a difficult time meeting the academic requirements in high school, and the CCSS have increased the academic requirements expected of all students (both those who receive services and those who do not). I am interested in understanding each teacher's curricular and pedagogical moves because the planned and unplanned (in the moment) decisions that teachers make to support students have consequences for student learning. Finally, I am interested in any potential changes in students' academic identities because learning about how students view their own learning and academic self is crucial for developing a learning environment that is collaborative and builds upon the assets students bring to school.

Theoretical Perspective

This study defines reading from a sociocultural and historical lens and draws upon definitions as it has evolved from work in New Literacy Studies (NLS) and socio-cognitive perspectives of

reading (Kintsch, 1988, 1998; RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). Several disciplines saw a "social turn" and move from an emphasis on individual behavior and minds towards a look at social and cultural interaction: NLS is one such movement (Barton, 1994; Gee, 1998; Heath, 1983; Street, 1984, 1995). The NLS is rooted in the idea that reading and writing can only be examined in the context of social and cultural (in addition to the historical, political, and economic) "practices of which they are but a part" (Gee, 1998, p.1). This movement bears resemblance to perspectives in situated cognition (Lave, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991) and activity theory (Engeström, 1990). These scholars argue that knowledge and intelligence are not only in individuals' minds; rather, they are:

> Distributed across the social practices (including language practices) and the various tools, technologies, and semiotic systems that a given "community of practice" uses in order to carry out its characteristic activities (e.g., part of a physicist's knowledge is embedded and distributed across her colleagues, social practices, tools, equipment, and texts). Knowing is a matter of being able to participate centrally in practice and learning is a matter of changing patterns of participation (with concomitant changes in identity). (Gee, 1998, p. 2)

As such, the relationship between text and context is salient (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). Namely, literacy practices have been defined in the following terms:

> The general ways of utilizing written language, which people draw upon in their daily lives. In the simplest sense, literacy practices are what people do with literacy. However, practices… also involve values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships… this include[s]… how people talk and make sense of literacy. (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 80)

Literacy is not viewed in a vacuum, as autonomous models might suggest, causing changes in the fabric of society and individuals as a result of its inherent properties (Street, 1984). Instead, a multifaceted approach to literacy, namely the ideological model, argues that literacy is a construct rooted in social, political, and historical forces (Street, 1984). Readers participate in a wide range of reading practices and various culturally appropriate ways of understanding (Gee, 2000; Heath, 1983; New London Group, 2000; Street, 2003).

Moreover, people use language to become at specific times and places certain socially meaningful "kinds" of people (Gee, 1999). Individuals emerge as a certain sort of person "who" or a certain sort of "what"–as such, different social languages or registers build different realities (Bakhtin, 1986; Gee, 1999). Duranti and Goodwin (1992) also posit that individuals' socially situated identities–such as "good" reader–are negotiated within and constructed out of moment-by-moment social interactions. Identity is further understood through text and social meanings (Bakhtin, 1986). Additionally, culture is mediated by artifacts such as language and other semiotic tools, as outlined by Vygotsky (1978) and scholars who were impacted by his thinking (Cole, 1996; Gutiérrez, Morales, & Martinez, 2009). Vygotsky viewed language as a uniquely important tool for mediating learning and development (Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978). Relatedly, the perspectives of collaborative cognition from activity theory are pertinent–these scholars posit that interactions between teachers and students and between students can influence students' adoption of literacy practices and cognitive skills (Freedman, Hull, Higgs, & Booten, 2016; Gutiérrez & Lee, 2009).

First introduced in *Thought and Language* (1962) and later in *Mind and Society* (1978), Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) offers critical insights into the design of effective instruction, learning, and assessment and is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). The ZPD helps us understand Vygotsky's broader

theoretical interest in how the inner life is molded by the outer world. In thinking about education as a transforming experience, Vygotsky argues that instruction should both lead development and inspire thinking that is still forming.

Griffin and Cole (1984) remind us that the development of a child does not have a "step-wise progression" (p. 46). Rather, development involves a "sea change" (Griffin & Cole, 1984, p. 46) during which the student's entire perspective shifts and starts anew. According to Vygotsky, development occurs "in a spiral, passing through the same point at each new revolution while advancing to a higher level" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 56). All in all, this is a qualitative change that requires a "big picture" (Chaiklin, 2003, p. 6) viewpoint.

Vygotsky conceptualizes learning and development not as separate entities as we sometimes view them in western thought, but interconnected, or *obuchenie* (which is the Russian translation) (Cole, 2009). The ZPD, though, is not the space in which the development of one skill occurs; instead, it is the space in which development in general is possible (Chaiklin, 2003, p. 3). The ZPD was designed to capture the "buds" or "flowers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86) of development. The ever-changing nature of mental functions can be seen when examining how a student performs with assistance. It is important to note that when working with the "expert" or tutor, the cognitive processes do not always advance and do not develop purely because of the interaction with the expert. That is, some learners' development will look different than others' development.

Over time, though, something may "click" for the student and the student may change his or her approach to a task at hand and, indeed, even to tasks outside of the school setting. The long-term process associated with the ZPD or "zone of next development" (Smagorinsky, 2018, p. 256) is more comprehensive than instructional scaffolding alone (Smagorinsky, 2018). Scaffolding is a common form of classroom assistance (a term first coined by Wood, Bruner, and Ross in 1976) and often involves working with others to accomplish a common goal or task. Scaffolding is most effective when the support is well suited to the individual's needs at a particular point in time. In essence, by working with a teacher, adult, or peer, the student receives extra assistance so they are able to successfully complete a task (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) that is out of reach when working alone.

The ZPD can be thought of as:

> [A] characteristic not solely of the child or of the teaching but of the child engaged in collaborative activity within specific social environments. The focus is on the social system within which we hope children learn, with the understanding that this social system is mutually and actively created by teacher and students. (Smagorinsky, 2018 citing Moll, 1990, p. 11)

When teachers support students, there is not an automatic scaffold because of "intersubjectivity" or "the degree to which different people share an understanding of their situation" and the potential challenges teachers and students have when "working according to shared assumptions" (Smagorinsky, 2018, p. 256).

Similarly, within the field of Ethnography of Communication, references to Vygotsky's ZPD are made regarding how children and novices take on socially and culturally appropriate ways of using language through interactions with more experienced others or adults (Duranti, 1997). Language Socialization (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989) pulls from a Vygotskian perspective of ZPD as well when explaining the full trajectory of a person when socialized to and through language during language interactions with more experienced individuals in their speech communities. This lens of learning and development will be integral to how literacy development and students' academic identities are viewed in this study and how the role of the teacher and materials (such as text) are conceived.

Literature Review

This section includes research that builds on sociocultural and historical and sociocognitive perspectives in order to provide background and rationale for the design of the study. In particular, I will discuss: (a) education reform and the CCSS; (b) instructional supports and disciplinary literacy; (c) vulnerable readers and identity; (d) the facilitation of complex learning within a disabilities framework; and (e) text complexity and its curricular implications.

Education Reform and the CCSS

As previously mentioned, while the broader implications of the implementation of the CCSS remain uncertain, it is apparent that there are areas for growth in how the CCSS account for the unique circumstances of each student. In particular, although the descriptions of language and literacy development for adolescents are laudable, the implementation of this work could be improved upon. Notably, Moje, Giroux and Muehling (2016) call for greater attention to "the complex intersection of students' backgrounds and interests with the goals of reading, writing, and communicating complex texts with and across multiple audiences" (p. 4). As an alternative approach, the authors suggest an "expansion" of the standards. That is, literacy teachers are both in a position to support students' achievement of this national set of standards and charged with the task of preparing students to have "fluency with and the ability to navigate across domain-specific literacy and cultural practices" so that students are "educat[ed]... for life" (Moje et al., 2016, p. 4).

The new focus on close reading in the CCSS has been the subject of recent debate. With origins in psychological behaviorism (and thinkers such as John Watson and B. F. Skinner) close reading stems from I. A. Richards's perspectives in the 1920s and New Critical theories of poetry. Richards envisioned a model of literary criticism that viewed literary texts as behaviors and proposed a view of text "as external phenomena without reference to internal mental states" (Gang, 2011, p. 1). Although these ideas from Richards were resisted by the New Critics, such as Cleanth Brooks and William K. Wimsatt, the New Critics eventually carried out the same behaviorist vision, and their ideas are still alive today[1].

When thinking about close reading, a debate around whether or not there is one "best" reading of a particular text emerges (Catterson & Pearson, 2017, p. 458). Catterson and Pearson (2017) offer a vision for adolescent close reading instruction for the 21st century built upon the notion that: (a) meaning is constructed at the intersection of a unique reader, text, and activity within a sociocultural context; (b) an expansive view of text includes print and digital (e.g., multimodal), short and long, carefully crafted and hastily jotted, official and popular; and (c) close reading should build identity, equity, and action, as well as knowledge (p. 461). Their suggestions include addressing: (a) background knowledge; (b) authentic reading and writing; (c) metadiscursive awareness; (d) critical literacy; and (e) dialogic discussion (Catterson & Pearson, 2017). Taking into account background knowledge means that students' cultural backgrounds and literacy practices are used to hone students' content and discursive knowledge. Additionally, tasks that are authentic provide students with opportunities to use close reading strategies that mirror the types of reading that happen in the real world and draw from these close readings to compose authentic texts. Next, students' metadiscursive awareness is useful for clarifying the purposes and structures of texts in various disciplines and genres; students can locate close reading strategies that are well suited for different purposes and structures. Critical literacy means students are brought in to question their own ideas, texts, and environment when closely reading. Finally, students benefit from instruction regarding how

[1] (As seen in perspectives that uphold the authority of the text or argue for the denial of authorial intent (Gang, 2011)).

to ask and respond to authentic questions during close reading and participate in conversations about their questions and analysis of text (Catterson & Pearson, 2017).

Instructional Supports and Disciplinary Literacy

Given the social nature of learning and reading, instructional models should take into account the roles of teacher and student. One model that articulates these roles and builds upon Vygotsky's ZPD is the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Rather than assuming "all the responsibility for performing a task" and then abruptly moving "to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility" (Duke & Pearson, 2002, p. 210) transitions are fluid and move back and forth between the student and teacher. This movement could occur within a class period, a unit, or a school year. Within this model, the instruction supports students as they develop into more experienced learners when approaching tasks with which they are not yet experts. For example, within a class period, a gradual release of instruction related to reading comprehension in an elementary classroom could include explicit use of a strategy (i.e., teacher and/or student modeling of the strategy), time for collaborative use of the strategy (i.e., guided practice with the strategy with the goal of moving students towards independence) and, eventually, students' independent use of the strategy (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011).

The social nature of learning and supporting students comes into heightened focus in the teaching of reading. Of course, reading has long been conceptualized as a social process–deemed a "complex and interactive process that includes cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and affective activity within equally complex situational contexts" (Valencia, 2010, p. 25 cites Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985). With respect to reading comprehension, the RAND Reading Study Group (2002) specifies the following major areas to consider: the reader, the text, the activity or purpose for reading, and the sociocultural context. When a student approaches a text, both psychological and social processes are involved. The RAND model states:

> The reader brings to the act of reading his or her cognitive capacities (attention, memory, critical analytic ability, inferencing, and visualization), motivation (a purpose for reading, interest in the content, self-efficacy as a reader), knowledge (vocabulary, domain, and topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge, knowledge of comprehension strategies), and experiences. (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002, p. xi-xii)

Discussion around the difference between reading and literacy is also pertinent. Literacy has recently been defined as "the process of using reading, writing, and oral language to extract, construct, integrate, and critique meaning through interaction and involvement with multimodal texts in the context of socially situated practices" (Frankel, Becker, Rowe, & Pearson, 2016, p. 7).

Literacy practices differ as well in each discipline. Goldman and colleagues (2016) offer a framework and methodology for drafting learning goals aimed at the knowledge and tasks students need to complete for high disciplinary literacy and achievement:

> The similarities and differences among disciplines with respect to how knowledge is constructed, represented, and communicated and thus how it is "read" are typically not a focus of content area instruction. Thus, students are left to figure out on their own that the same "rules" do not apply across content areas. (p. 1)

Engaging students in the inquiry practices of science, for example, means using science texts as resources for inquiry and thus significant changes to current science instruction (Pearson, Moje, & Greenleaf, 2010). Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) have proposed a model of reading development summarized in three phases: (a) *basic literacy*–learning to decode words, develop a reading vocabulary, and comprehend text; (b) *intermediate literacy*–using general strategies for decoding longer words and comprehending narrative and expository text; and (c) *disciplinary literacy*–using

specialized strategies for comprehending and responding to texts that reflect the demands of a specific discipline (p. 44). This is not a linear view of students' literacy development; readers could show the characteristics of more than one stage during their learning (as a result of factors such as background knowledge, interests, purpose for reading, and text complexity). As students progress across the grades, however, they read increasingly complex texts. Interacting with these texts means they will need to adjust their strategies and to hone literacy practices that reflect critical reading, writing, and thinking in order to understand content in each area (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

Vulnerable Readers and Identity

Reading may present challenges to readers, especially given their particular environment. Jaeger (2015) describes the difficulties that various children face when reading and how they improve through support that highlights a search for strengths. Additionally, when talking about vulnerable readers, it is necessary to examine the institution of special education. The relationship between institutions and special education is salient and often unquestioned (Mehan, 2000). Mehan, for example, sheds light on the gap between student behavior in the classroom and teachers' reasons for referring students to special education, thus underscoring the influence of teacher expectations on student learning. Furthermore, he documents multiple languages in a special education evaluation meeting–historical, sociological, and psychological–and notes how the psychological language (or the "institutionally sanctioned version of experience") was "superimposed upon multiple and competing versions of experience" (Mehan, 2000, p. 264).

Mehan (1996) also notes the power dynamics and hierarchy that underpin special education arenas. He explains how the context of special education is one in which "one mode of representing the world (its objects, events, people, etc.) gains primacy over others, transforming modes of representation from an array on a horizontal plane to a ranking on a vertical plane" (Mehan, 1996, p. 248). Mehan finds that when words such as "normal" and "disabled" are used, intelligence or talent could be seen as existing in the student as the "personal and private property of the individual" (Mehan, 2000, p. 265). Therefore, the social construction of these terms is hidden. Moreover, when these "abilities" are considered the property of the students, then disability is also the property of students and therefore situated "beneath the skin and between the ears" (Mehan, 2000, p. 248).

Research similarly reinforces the notion that identity, disability, and literacy are often interrelated. Mahiri and Godley's (1998) study looks at one student's experience with carpal tunnel and the changes in her ability to write as a result of this painful health condition. These researchers reveal how "the consequences of literacy for an individual are more essentially connected to particular ways that acts of writing and other literacy practices have been socially constructed and thereby given social meanings" (Mahiri & Godley, 1998, p. 18). Such an analysis again brings attention to contextual and local dynamics and contrasts with "autonomous" views of literacy (Street, 1984).

Hall (2010) also found that how students interacted with readings in class was largely influenced by how they saw themselves as readers and a shared effort to keep others (i.e., teachers, other students, family members) from viewing them as "poor readers." In her research, she incorporates work from Corte and Levine (2002), who theorize that not all identities have the same value. Those with characteristics that are in demand have "identity capital" and often have more power than others who do not have this capital or cannot gain it (Corte & Levine, 2002 cited by Hall, 2010). The discussion of identity and moving in between and across various disciplines and cultures would be incomplete without a discussion of power, privilege, and positioning.

Students can be positioned as capable or not capable as a result of their literacy practices. Power imbalances in the school context, in particular, are relevant. In a study from Michaels (1981), social interaction around sharing time "constructed some children as successfully on the way to

acquiring school-based literacy, and others as not; or some students as being coherent and others as 'not making sense'" (p. 603). Oral sharing time practices privileged the topic-centered discourse and linear styles of speaking and writing and an emergent type of report and essay literacy used by the Caucasian students over the topic-associative style of speaking and writing used by the African American students. Michaels' study highlights how literacy practices of Caucasian teachers and students, themselves anchored in children's home and cultural discourses, are viewed as more powerful than others and, as a result, position students unequally.

Building upon the links among identity, culture, and power, readers can encounter specific challenges when making meaning of text. Specific reading issues can include insufficient conceptual background or vocabulary about a topic (McNamara & Kintsch, 1996). In addition to problems with topic knowledge, students may encounter problems with complex syntactic forms and unfamiliar organizational structures in expository writing (Meyer, 1975). Advanced text that is often found in content areas can present a challenge to comprehension. Text factors that cause difficulty include: incomplete information (the very sort of information that can present a clear context for content and that helps link existing background knowledge to new information); indirect references (especially pronouns and other anaphora that fail to specify the specific noun or verb referred to); absence of clearly signaled between events or ideas connections (no becauses and therefores to signal relationships among ideas); extraneous ideas and events; and sentences with a high density of concepts and ideas (McKeown, Beck, Sinatra, & Loxterman, 1992; McNamara, Kintsch, Songer, & Kintsch, 1996).

Textbook language itself may present a challenge to vulnerable readers. Writing in textbooks often does not link ideas using connectives and subordinate relationships (often a practice that is used to create shorter sentences that align with readability formulas). Other common issues are brief paragraphs that merely list facts and definitions with minimal elaboration or discussion of how information is related. Short sentences may confuse readers and give them a false sense of understanding to the point where they do not realize they need to use problem solving strategies to remedy their understanding (McNamara, 2007). Other students who may have a satisfactory level of skills and knowledge fail to make the necessary inferences for an in depth understanding (McNamara & Kintsch, 1996). As a result, unengaged reading hinders comprehension.

Facilitating Complex Learning Within a Disabilities Framework

It is a challenge to operationalize complex reading and learning in the disciplines for any student; it is even more challenging to meet that challenge for students who have, for a range of reasons, been diagnosed as possessing a learning disability. Frankel, Pearson, and Nair (2011) detail the varying theories about reading disabilities in terms of how they explain comprehension difficulties and how they plan for amelioration; the perspectives include: (a) the Interactive Compensatory Model; (b) the Phonological Core Variable Difference Model; (c) the Comprehension Deficit Hypothesis; and (d) the Interactive Model of Reading Disability. The rationale for why readers fail to comprehend is similar within the Interactive Compensatory Model and the Phonological Core Variable Difference Model as both locate the problems within the reader. Whereas the Interactive Compensatory Model is rooted in the idea that poor comprehenders rely just as much (if not more) on context than skilled readers in order to recognize words, the Phonological Core Variable Difference Model identifies poor readers as those who struggle with processing the sounds of language (phonemes). It is important to note, however, that the Phonological Core Variable Difference Model distinguishes two groups of poor readers: students who experience challenges when reading and "learning disabled or dyslexic" readers. Both groups showcase a phonological core deficit or challenges with processing the specific sound elements that make-up language; however, students who experience challenges when reading often show a "horizontal" deficit in cognitive

capacity involving a modest lag in several cognitive modules (e.g., phonological, visual, lexical, and perhaps even language processing), whereas the dyslexic profile shows a "vertical deficit" or an underdeveloped phonological module (Frankel et al., 2011). Another popular explanation of reading comprehension problems comes from the Comprehension Deficit Hypothesis–a perspective grounded in theories of reading strategy development. Researchers from this perspective posit that some students possess sufficient decoding and phonological skills, but they are in need of particular strategies and skills that would allow them to better link the words they decode with their own knowledge (Frankel et al., 2011). Learning and practicing strategies such as questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and predicting are believed to benefit students who exhibit this profile.

Proponents of the Interactive Model of Reading Disability perspective (after Lipson & Wixson, 1986) provide a third approach by viewing reading as a complex interplay among the text, the reader, and a particular context (Frankel et al., 2011). In this case, text refers to features such as orthography or visual markers; the reader involves the person's background knowledge about the topic or text structure, and the context involves the specific task and purpose. A reader's comprehension, therefore, can be seen as a product of these attributes and is malleable when one factor shifts. In other words, the interactive model brings the information processing and sociocultural perspectives together. Seen as a dynamic interaction, reading and writing abilities vary as a result of contextual factors (such as the classroom setting) and reader/writer factors (such as student interests) (Frankel et al., 2011). Proponents of this view argue that even though neurological or constitutional differences are related to reading and writing disabilities, the percentage of students with these issues is small.

One approach to grappling with how vulnerable readers experience instruction, as well as specifying ways of providing instruction to facilitate learning, is the theory of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This perspective grew out of the architecture discipline's movement of Universal Access–just as escalators allow increased physical access for diverse groups, UDL applications in the classroom aim to equal the playing field for learners (Rose & Meyer, 2002). The UDL framework allows for flexible curriculum that in standards-based settings extends to instructional goals, methods, assessments, and materials. The framework also utilizes technologies to build upon learner differences (Meo, 2008). Three main tenets include: (a) multiple or flexible representations of information and concepts (the "what of learning); (b) multiple or flexible options in expression and performance (the "how" of learning) and; (c) multiple or flexible ways to engage learners in the curriculum (the "why" of learning) (Rose & Meyer, 2002). The underlying theory of the framework–that all learners can be successful with the proper support–holds promise. Additional research is needed, however, to better understand the most important aspects of the UDL approach, the common barriers when implementing UDL based strategies (CAST, 2011), and the efficacy of the instructional scaffolds that are specified and/or implied by UDL. Perhaps the key question for UDL is whether differentiation techniques that allow teachers to adapt instruction by considering the content, process, and product in a particular lesson or unit of study (Tomlinson, 2014) actually result in more learning and better performance on the part of students.

What is not clear about these different ways of defining "disability" among students who are not successful in schools is whether these different explanations of barriers to comprehension are mutually exclusive or complementary; that is, can students possess multiple barriers simultaneously or not. While it is not a direct goal of this study to answer this question, it is possible that we might gain some insight about it in the course of examining the impact of close reading pedagogy on students' reading comprehension.

Text Complexity and Curricular Implications

Crucial to the issue of how teachers can support students' understanding of complex text is an understanding of what factors can make text easier or harder to understand. Appendix A of the CCSS defines text complexity as having qualitative, quantitative, and reader-task aspects. Qualitative features are best measured by an attentive human reader and include questions such as:

1. Is this text conversational or academic?
2. How much of the writing is literal and how much is figurative?
3. How many themes are there and how complex are they?

In contrast, quantitative features are typically measured by computer software (e.g., Flesh Kincaid or Lexile) and look at syntactic complexity, sentence structure, and word length. Other analyses look at the level of vocabulary. Finally, reader-task considerations are usually best dealt with by teachers with knowledge of their students and subject areas. This lens is often applied when designing instruction (NGO & CCSSO, 2010). While quantitative and qualitative reading measures tend to reveal an estimated 36%-65% of the variance in complexity, teachers need to be ready to consider how factors such as the reader, activity, and contextual aspects play a role in text complexity (Valencia, Wixson, & Pearson, 2014).

Up until recently, standards did not specify the degree to which text was more or less challenging for students from one grade to the next (Pearson & Hiebert, 2014). Furthermore, the CCSS call for a balanced system to ensure readers are matched with the right texts given their current skill level (Hiebert & Mesmer, 2013). Indeed, qualitative, quantitative, or reader/task considerations independently are not sufficient to fully understand how texts differ in complexity and comprehensibility. More research is needed to better understand text features and other factors such as reader and task qualities that need to be taken consideration (Pearson & Hiebert, 2014). When teachers know their subject matter and students well, this process may seem automatic. Essentially, three variables need to be taken into consideration: (a) tasks; (b) scaffolding; and (c) teacher goals (Valencia et al., 2014). When a teacher considers the tasks they assign students, they might ask themselves about the choice of text, possible forms of support, and peer learning opportunities, or, alternatively, reflect on their own goals.

The CCSS's advice for teachers regarding how to approach choices related to reader-task variables has not been fully transparent (Valencia et al., 2014). Understanding what makes texts complex, how the types of tasks we assign students influence comprehension, and what it means to read in each discipline would be helpful starting points for ensuring that students learn. Additionally, armed with the knowledge that comprehension has a "dynamic, complex, and tentative character" (Valencia et al., 2014, p. 273), teachers are charged with the role of developing tasks for students. These tasks include what students are asked to do and the texts to which they apply the tasks (Valencia et al., 2014).

Summary and Implications for the Current Study

As a result of the CCSS, the guidelines for reading instruction in secondary classrooms include a greater emphasis on objectives for applying what all students learn from complex text. Scaffolded instruction in a collaborative and dialogic environment that builds on students' knowledge has been shown to support students' literacy development. In order for students to develop claims about what the text says, means, and does, teachers need to provide students with curricula and instruction that includes discipline-specific tasks and opportunities for students to build upon what they know.

Disciplinary literacy research (Pearson, Moje, & Greenleaf, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008) advocates for a disciplinary approach that includes critical reading, writing, and thinking skills specific to each content area; however, it is unclear which strategies are most beneficial to students

who have IEPs. Similarly, Pearson and Gallagher (1983) outlined approaches to reading and thinking used by expert readers such as using background knowledge, making inferences, summarizing, and self-monitoring understanding and presented a "model of explicit instruction" (Webb, Massey, Goggans, & Flajole, 2019 cite Pearson & Gallagher, 1983) with the goal of supporting teachers with adding explicit instruction of comprehension strategies to their classrooms. The original GRR model included three stages (teacher model, guided practice, and student application and responsibility) (Webb, Massey, Goggans, & Flajole, 2019 cite Pearson & Gallagher, 1983), but more research is needed to understand what nuances to the model, if any, exist for students with IEPs.

Similarly, differentiated instruction in the classroom that is rooted in the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983) and UDL aims to equal the playing field for learners (Rose & Meyer, 2002) and is thought to be useful when designing lessons, but again more research is needed about how these theories apply to reading. Overall, there are gaps in the literature about the CCSS and students who have IEPs. Most of the literature focuses on comprehension and does not address how to engage students with skills such as fluency, decoding, and phonological awareness. Moreover, diverse learners, such as emergent bilingual learners, may have IEPs, and yet again more research is needed to understand their experiences with complex text and the instructional strategies that are best suited to supporting their reading success.

In contrast, the research base for how students who have IEPs view themselves as learners is robust. Research suggests that students' reading motivation and engagement can be influenced by instruction (Moje, Giroux, & Muehling, 2016). More work, though, is needed to understand how context influences student reading motivation and engagement.

Lastly, the literacy practices that students hone outside of school are important when considering their performance on literacy tasks in school. The literature suggests that students come to school with range of experiences with literacy and that some of these practices are valued more than others in school. More research is needed to understand how teachers can build upon the strengths that students bring and how to connect literacy practices that are not valued in school with those valued in school.

While upping the ante on text complexity, close reading, and the dialogic discussions that support readers' attempts to cope with both of these new demands in text and task complexity present challenges for all secondary students, they represent an even greater challenge for students whose school performance thus far has earned them a label of either learning- or reading-disabled. The question of how to help these classified students cope with the reality that the new standards apply to them as well as non-classified students, has not been well-examined. This small-scale case study represents an initial attempt to begin just such an examination.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Overview

This formative experiment explored the potential for teaching vulnerable readers in secondary Special Day English classrooms how to comprehend and closely read complex disciplinary text using a series of instructional protocols. A single classroom and teacher in each of two high schools were my collaborators in this work. One teacher, Ms. Pamela Romano, taught 11th- and 12th-mixed-grade Special Day English at Playa Vista High School and the other, Ms. Barbara O'Neil-Jones, taught 9th-grade Special Day English at Clinton High School. In each classroom, a few focal students served as the primary participants to investigate the effectiveness of the protocols. The instructional protocols at each school were co-designed by the classroom teacher and myself. I assessed its effectiveness by analyzing data from teacher interviews, student interviews, student surveys, teacher surveys, student work, student performance on assessments, classroom observations, and teacher planning sessions.

While the participating classrooms varied by grade, they shared similar social contexts. Both schools were large public high schools with Special Day English classrooms with less than 15 students, both taught by a teacher who had a special education credential. Both teachers taught eight weeks of close reading curriculum, which consisted of a series of these co-designed instructional protocols; each teacher and I designed the curriculum in concert and discussed the curriculum during regular planning sessions. At both sites, I conducted pre- and post-interviews with the students and the teacher. I also conducted classroom observations, administered a teacher survey, collected student work and personal information, and administered pre-survey and post-survey questions to the students about literacy interests and reading motivation. At one of the schools, I was also able to conduct a post-interview with a paraprofessional who, as it turned out, was involved in assisting students and monitoring their work and assessments during the intervention.

The following sets of questions guided my research at both schools:

- How do special education educators work with students who have IEPs to support the ongoing comprehension of complex disciplinary text? What factors do teachers take into consideration when designing instruction? What is the relationship of instruction to changes over time in students' success and engagement when reading complex text?
- How do students within a special education context view themselves as learners? Do those views change when a teacher engages them in close reading practices? What aspects of the classroom context influence whether or not students adopt these new practices and/or develop more positive academic identities? To what degree do any of the practices they are learning in their English Special Day classes transfer to their other discipline-specific classes, such as science or history–especially when they are accountable for understanding complex text?

Setting and Participants

I conducted my study in two Special Day English classes in different high schools and school districts. Each school was located in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area in northern California.

Playa Vista High School

Located in a mid-size suburb of the Bay Area, the school website for Playa Vista High School reported a 97% graduation rate and student enrollment of 2,934 during the 2016-2017 school year. The school had 136 teachers during the 2016-2017 school year as well. During the 2017-2018 school year, the percent of total enrollment by student ethnicity group was: Black or African American 6.5%; American Indian or Alaska Native .4%; Asian 27.7%; Filipino 4.3%; Hispanic or Latinx 23.5%; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander .4%; and Caucasian 27.9%. In addition, enrollment included 24.8% free or reduced lunch recipients, 4.3% emergent bilingual learners, 8.1% students with disabilities, and .1% foster youth.

The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) test results for students during 2017-2018 for English Language Arts (ELA) included a 70% passing rate for the school and 67% passing rate for the district. Within the sub-group of students with disabilities, 43 of the 52 students were tested, and 32.56% of those students met or exceeded the passing score.

Teacher. Pamela Romano was an expert special education teacher with credentials in special education, English, and social science. She completed graduate degrees for English Literature and English Education and had four years of teaching experience at Playa Vista High School, along with 17 years of experience at other schools, a community college, and a juvenile detention center. Ms. Romano worked closely with a paraprofessional in the classroom, Mrs. Johnson. Mrs. Johnson supported one of the students in the study throughout all of his classes.

Students. Following our meeting, I completed an application for conducting research within her district and met in person with the school and district representatives. All 15 students in Ms. Romano's Special Day English classroom were invited to participate in the study. I shared student assent and parent/guardian permission forms and answered questions about the study in October 2018 during a visit to her classroom. Three students–Luke, Elizabeth, and Steven–participated in the study. The students provided student assent and parent and/or guardian consent. The focal teacher helped me identify students that she thought would benefit from the study.

Luke. Luke was a 16-year-old 11th-grade student whose home language was English. He was Caucasian and Filipino and spoke English at home. He enjoyed learning Tagalog with his maternal grandmother and independently and learning sign language in school. He enjoyed video games and spending time with his family. The teacher commented on how much progress he had made in his academic skills during high school. Luke typically spent time in the teacher's classroom during lunch and enjoyed using the laptops in the classroom because they had games. Luke would sometimes talk about his younger brother and how they would share books and play games together. During the class breaks, he occasionally asked other students if they wanted to play video games with him.

Elizabeth. Elizabeth was a 17-year-old 11th-grade student and an avid reader who always carried several books with her in her backpack. She was Caucasian and her home language was English. She often forgot to bring a writing utensil to class and worked slowly when completing written assignments. In addition to her academic classes, she was enrolled in vocational classes at the school because she would not graduate with a standard diploma. She would sometimes choose to stay in the classroom during lunch and socialize, instead of going to lunch.

Steven. Steven was an 18-year-old 11th-grade student who played multiple musical instruments and participated in the school orchestra and band. He was Asian and Caucasian and his home language was English. The teacher mentioned that he had another sibling who attended the same school. He had been homeschooled in the past and often worked with Mrs. Johnson.

Clinton High School

Located in a large city in the Bay Area, the school opened in 1940 and had a 90.3% graduation rate during the 2016-2017 school year. The school enrolled approximately 2,067 students during the 2017-2018 school year. The percent of total enrollment by student ethnicity group was: Black or African American 5.9%; American Indian or Alaska Native .4%; Asian 49.8%; Filipino 3.6%; Hispanic or Latinx 25.2%; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander .5%; and Caucasian 8.3%. In addition, enrollment included 53.5% free or reduced lunch recipients, 16.4% emergent bilingual learners, 9.8% students with disabilities, and .3% foster youth. CAASPP test results for all students during the 2017-2018 school year for ELA for the school was 65% and the district was 55%. 8.11% of the subgroup students with disabilities (with 37 of 41 students tested) passed.

Teacher. Barbara O'Neil-Jones was an expert special education teacher with credentials in special education. She completed a graduate degree in special education and had over 14 years of

teaching experience. In addition to the 9th-grade Special Day English class, she also co-taught a 9th-grade English class and a study skills elective.

After I contacted the Special Education department head of Clinton High School with information about my study, Ms. O'Neil-Jones emailed me to find out more information. Given her background in disciplinary literacy, she was interested in learning about the study. We spoke on the phone to discuss the study timeline and overview before meeting in person.

Students. All 13 students in her classroom were invited to participate in the study. I shared student assent and parent/guardian permission forms and answered questions about the study in November 2018 during a visit to her classroom. Two 9th-grade students–Nina and Lucia–participated in the study after providing student assent and parent/guardian consent. Ms. O'Neil-Jones helped me identify students from her class that she thought would benefit from the study.

Nina. Nina was a 15-year-old 9th-grade student who frequently read aloud during classroom instruction and was Hispanic. Her home language was English and she spoke some French. She would often share questions aloud during class and socialized with the other students.

Lucia. Lucia was a 14-year-old 9th-grade student who would participate during classroom discussions in Ms. O'Neil-Jones's class orally or by writing. She was Hispanic and her home language was English. Her classwork was often adorned with drawings in addition to her writing. When I first met her, she showed interest in learning more about me by asking questions. Lucia often worked individually with the teacher or a paraprofessional who was present during class.

Researcher Role

My goal before the study was to take on the role of a participant observer in Ms. Romano's classroom. When I first met Ms. Romano's class, I introduced myself as a former teacher who grew up in Illinois and taught in New York, Illinois, and California before entering graduate school. When taking my classroom observation notes, I used either my computer or notebook. After the first several weeks of the study, I supported students individually with the class assignment if they had questions. I typically printed copies of the student handouts for the intervention lessons that I had co-planned with Ms. Romano and brought them with me during my classroom observation visits. For the first half of the study, I sat in a chair next to Ms. Romano's desk because that was where I sat on my first day in the class, per her suggestion. Afterward, I sat either in that seat or in a seat in the middle of the classroom because two of the focal students had their seats changed half way through the study and I did not want to always sit next to the focal students in order to maintain anonymity.

Similarly, my goal before the study was to take on the role of a participant observer in Ms. O'Neil-Jones's classroom. When I first met Ms. O'Neil-Jones's class, I also introduced myself as a former teacher. When taking my classroom observation notes, I used either my computer or notebook. After the first few weeks of the study, I supported students individually or in small groups with the class assignment if they had questions. The seating arrangement in her classroom changed multiple times during the study; however, I typically sat either at the teacher's desk in the back corner of the room or in a chair on the far left side of the classroom because there was limited space in the room.

Data Collection at Playa Vista High School

Study Phases

With the goal of answering my research questions, I gathered data in four phases during the 2018-2019 school year. Phase One, from October to December, involved initial data collection. During this time, I conducted my pre-observation in English for the three students and history for two students and had the three students complete a pre-survey, pre-reading assessments, and a pre-interview. My purpose was to learn about student reading motivation and engagement, reading performance, and literacy practices. I also completed my teacher pre-interview. From the pre-

observation in the focal classroom, I aimed to gather a baseline for instruction and student performance and engagement. I also met with the focal teacher for planning sessions where we discussed her curriculum. As part of Phase Two from mid-December to February, I observed two-three days per week in the focal classroom during Unit One for four weeks. I also met periodically for planning sessions with the teacher. During the sessions, we looked at sample lesson plans that I provided and mapped out the four weeks of close reading instruction. I took field notes during my observations and audio recorded 20 minutes of one lesson at the end of January. At the end of Phase Two, the focal teacher and I met for another planning session in order to reflect on Unit One and map out possible lessons for Unit Two. My purpose was to co-design four weeks of close reading instruction and observe the teacher's instruction and students' reactions to the curriculum.

During Phase Three, I observed two to three days per week in the focal classroom during Unit Two for four weeks. I took field notes during my observations and audio recorded 45 minutes of one lesson in mid-February. My purpose was to co-design an additional four weeks of close reading instruction and observe the teacher's instruction and students' reactions to the curriculum. I opted for two units in order to compare student progress over an eight-week period.

During Phase Four, I conducted my post-observations. Two students completed a post-survey, post-reading assessment, and post-interview, and one student completed a post-survey and section of the post-reading assessment. The teacher completed a post-interview and survey. Also, the paraprofessional completed an interview. I aimed to learn what, if any, changes occurred after the baseline observations and assessments as a result of the eight weeks of close reading instruction. Table 1 presents a summary of data sources at Playa Vista High School (see Appendix A for a sequence of data collection).

Table 1: Summary of Data Sources at Playa Vista High School

Data Source	Description
Interviews N= 8	• 5 student interviews (2 interviews each with 2 students and 1 interview with 1 student); approx. 1 hour of audio data • 2 teacher interviews (1 interview each during Phases One and Four); approx. 40 minutes of audio data • 1 paraprofessional interview; approx. 20 minutes of audio data
Observations	• 15 classroom field notes • Approx. 80 minutes of transcribed classroom audio data • 4 field notes from 2 students' history class
Student Work	• 40 pieces of student work for 3 students • Handouts and lessons from the focal classroom
Surveys N=7	• 6 surveys from 3 students (3 pre-surveys and 3 post-surveys) • 1 survey from the focal teacher
Other Information	• Demographic data for 3 students • 6 planning sessions with the focal teacher • Fall and Spring grades for 3 students • SBAC scores for 2 students

Student Data Sources

I collected a wide array of data on the students, including interviews, surveys, and work samples. I also gathered demographic data on students including date of birth, ethnicity, language background (including home language and any languages spoken), grades, and sex.

Student interviews. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B) allowed me to ask students to explain and comment on both prior instruction they had been receiving and the instruction during the units. I used the interviews to learn about students' close reading practices outside of school and their overall attitudes and dispositions towards literacy. I adopted Moje and Tysvaer's (2010) Literacy Practices interview protocol in order to gather information about students' experiences and text preferences.

Student surveys. I administered a survey (see Appendix C) before and after the study to the three students in order to gather information about any changes in their reading motivation and engagement. The survey responses informed the curriculum design and provided data for my research questions. I modified the Motivation to Read Profile for adolescents used by Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) and questions from an earlier study about reading identity (Smith, 2015).

Student work samples. I gathered student work samples from the three students to better assess students' literacy practices and track changes in their literacy practices. This included student essays and short answer written responses to their reading and the key concepts and vocabulary from the units.

Student reading assessments. At a global level, I examined reading performance from California's ELA Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments (SBAC) administered in middle school for two students. By requesting access to students' SBAC scores, I was able to compare student performance in high school with middle school. As a transfer measure, at pre- and post-test stages, I administered released blocks from a cross-listed fourth- and eighth-grade literary National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam to two students and at the pre-test stage for one student. I also administered an informal running record to gauge fluency abilities (using the Qualitative Reading Inventory-6 (QRI-6) assessment at the "middle school" level) as a distal (far removed from the intervention) assessment to two students at pre- and post-test stages and to one student at the pre-test stage.

Classroom Data Sources

I collected a range of data on the classroom, including observation notes and audio recordings of lessons and instructional planning notes.

Observation notes and audio recordings of classroom lessons. Before administering the adapted curricula, I conducted close observations in the classroom and wrote conceptual memos to capture the teacher and students' literacy practices, using a framework for recording student and teacher talk. This information informed the design process in each classroom. I continued to observe instruction as the two reading units were being taught in the classroom. I observed two to three times per week for each four-week unit. One lesson from each unit was audio recorded and transcribed (in other words, a total of two lessons from the classroom). At the beginning and end of the study, I also observed two students in their history class. I made ethnographic observations when observing these disciplinary classrooms and wrote conceptual notes to capture the teacher and focal students' literacy practices.

Instructional planning notes. I held six planning sessions with Ms. Romano; three sessions were audio recorded. When meeting with the teacher during the planning sessions, I shared relevant research and close reading activities. We decided upon the specific text for the two units during the planning sessions. The text either came from the teacher's current portfolio of instructional

materials/plans, or were sought and selected (e.g., from open source or library materials) during the sessions.

Teacher Data Sources

I gathered information about the teacher including a survey, interviews, and informal communications data.

Teacher survey. I asked Ms. Romano to respond to questions (see Appendix D) about her own education and teaching experience. The survey informed my interview.

Teacher interviews. Using a semi-structured protocol (see Appendix E), I interviewed the teacher before and after the reading units. The interviews allowed me to identify existing literacy practices and changes in instructional and literacy practices during the study. The initial teacher interview supported my understanding of how and why she made instructional decisions and how they aligned with the students for whom she was responsible. The intent was to learn what instruction the teacher planned to teach and the teacher's goals for her students. The later interviews inquired about the teacher's opinions about how students responded to instruction and whether the teacher found the instruction impactful on student literacy achievement. At the end of the study, I interviewed the paraprofessional, Mrs. Johnson, in the class. The interview allowed me to identify literacy and instructional practices during the study.

Informal communications. I corresponded with the teacher over the phone and email when initially selecting students and planning lessons for the two reading units.

Data Collection at Clinton High School

Study Phases

With the goal of answering my research questions, I gathered data in four phases during the 2018-2019 school year. Phase One, from November to January, involved initial data collection. During this time, I conducted my pre-observation and had the two students complete a pre-survey and pre-interview. I also completed my teacher pre-interview. My purpose was to learn about student reading motivation and literacy practices. From the pre-observation in the focal classroom, I aimed to gather a baseline for instruction and student performance and engagement. I also met with the focal teacher for planning sessions where we discussed her curriculum. During Phase Two, from January to February, I observed two to three days per week in the focal classroom during Unit One for four weeks. I also observed one student in her science class. The teacher and I met periodically for planning sessions as well. During the sessions, we looked at sample lesson plans that I provided and mapped out the four weeks of close reading instruction. I took field notes during my observations and audio recorded 45 minutes of one lesson at the end of January. At the end of Phase Two, the focal teacher and I met for a planning session in order to reflect on Unit One and map out possible lessons for Unit Two. My purpose was to co-design four weeks of close reading instruction and observe the teacher's instruction and students' reactions to the curriculum.

During Phase Three, I observed two to three days per week in the focal classroom during Unit Two for four weeks. I took field notes during my observations and audio recorded 45 minutes of one lesson in mid-February. I opted for two units in order to compare student progress over an eight-week period.

During Phase Four, I conducted my post-observation. The two students completed a post-survey and post-interview and the teacher completed a post-interview and post-survey. My purpose was to learn about reading motivation and engagement, and literacy practices. I aimed to learn what, if any, changes occurred after the baseline observations and assessments as a result of the eight weeks of close reading instruction. Table 2 presents a summary of data sources at Clinton High School.

Table 2: Summary of Data Sources at Clinton High School

Data Source	Description
Interviews N= 6	• 4 student interviews (2 interviews each with 2 students); approx. 1 hour of audio data • 2 teacher interviews (1 interview each during Phases One and Four); approx. 40 minutes of audio data
Observations	• 15 classroom field notes • Approx. 120 minutes of transcribed classroom audio data • 1 field note from 1 students' science class
Student Work	• 40 pieces of student work for 2 students • Handouts and lessons from the focal classroom
Surveys N=5	• 4 surveys from 2 students (2 pre-surveys and 2 post-surveys) • 1 survey from the focal teacher
Other Information	• Demographic data for 2 students • 5 planning sessions with the focal teacher • Fall and Spring grades for 2 students • SBAC scores for 2 students

Student Data Sources

I collected a wide array of data on the students, including interviews, surveys, work samples, and assessments. I also gathered demographic data on students including date of birth, ethnicity, language background (including home language and any languages spoken), grades, and sex.

Student interviews. The flexibility of the semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix B) allowed me to ask the two students to explain and comment on both prior instruction they had been receiving and the instruction during the units. I used the interviews to learn about students' close reading practices outside of school and their overall attitudes and dispositions towards literacy. I adopted Moje and Tysvaer's (2010) Literacy Practices interview protocol in order to gather information about students' experiences and text preferences.

Student surveys. I administered a survey (see Appendix C) before and after the study to the two students in order to gather information about any changes in their reading motivation and engagement. The survey responses informed the curriculum design and provided data for my research questions. I modified the Motivation to Read Profile for adolescents used by Gambrell, Palmer, Codling, and Mazzoni (1996) and questions from an earlier study about reading identity (Smith, 2015).

Student work samples. I gathered student work samples from the two students to better assess students' literacy practices and track changes in their literacy practices. This included student essays and short answer written responses to their reading and the key concepts and vocabulary from the units.

Student reading assessments. At a global level, I examined reading performance from the state assessment ELA SBAC administered in middle school for two students and the district administered Accelerated Reading assessment that students completed in October 2018 and January

2019. By requesting access to students' SBAC scores, I was able to compare student performance in high school with middle school. I requested access to informal running records for the two students in order to gauge their fluency abilities. Ms. O'Neil-Jones administered the QRI-6 assessment multiple times during the school year.

Classroom Data Sources

I collected a range of data on the classroom, including observation notes and audio recordings of lessons and instructional planning notes.

Observation notes and audio recordings. Before administering the adapted curricula, I conducted close observations in the classroom and wrote conceptual memos to capture the teacher and students' literacy practices, using a framework for recording student and teacher talk. This information informed the design process in each classroom. I continued to observe instruction as the two reading units were being taught in the classroom. I observed two to three times per week for each four-week unit. One lesson from each unit was audio recorded and transcribed (in other words, a total of two lessons from the classroom). In February, I also observed one student in her science class. I made ethnographic observations when observing and wrote conceptual notes to capture the teacher and focal student's literacy practices.

Instructional planning notes. I held five planning sessions with Ms. O'Neil-Jones; three sessions were audio recorded. When meeting with the teacher during the planning sessions, I shared relevant research and close reading activities. We decided upon the specific text for the two units during the planning sessions. The text either came from the teacher's current portfolio of instructional materials, or were sought and selected (e.g., from open source or library materials) during the sessions.

Teacher Data Sources

I gathered information about the teacher including a survey, interviews, and informal communications.

Teacher survey. I asked Ms. O'Neil-Jones to respond to questions (see Appendix D) about her own education and teaching experience. This information informed the interview.

Teacher interviews. Using a semi-structured protocol (see Appendix E), I interviewed the teacher before and after the reading units. The interviews allowed me to identify existing literacy practices and changes in instructional and literacy practices during the study. The initial teacher interview supported my understanding of how and why she made instructional decisions and how they aligned with the students for whom she was responsible. The intent was to learn what instruction the teacher planned to teach and the teacher's goals for her students. The later interviews inquired about the teacher's opinions about how students responded to instruction and whether the teacher found the instruction impactful on student literacy achievement.

Informal communications. I corresponded with the teacher over the phone and email when initially selecting students and planning lessons for the two reading units.

Data Analysis

I chose a qualitative focus for the study (Firestone, 1993; Peshkin, 1988) to respond to the "the fullness of the people, events, and settings" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 418) and I aimed to bring attention to my own subjectivities (Peshkin, 1998). Shaped by my research questions, I used a common approach across the two sites: an explanatory data analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and constant comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) approach to unpack the relationships between different sources of data and to seek larger patterns of instruction and adaptation as they related to the text, the design process, and most important, students' ongoing experiences of success or failure in the adapted curricula. Through an inductive process, I created codes for the data and refined them until I identified patterns across the data and abstract codes. For reliability, I triangulated the data

across sources (e.g., student work, observations, and interviews). Overall, I aimed to capture an emic perspective from the teacher and students by using ethnographic methods, such as field notes and interviews (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Yin, 2009).

Matching Data Collection Tools to Questions

For each question, certain data sources proved more useful than others.

Research Question 1: *How do special education educators work with students who have IEPs to support the ongoing comprehension of complex disciplinary text? What factors do teachers take into consideration when designing instruction? What is the relationship of instruction to changes over time in students' success and engagement when reading complex text?*

Across both classrooms, I focused mainly on the field notes and transcripts from my classroom observations and interviews with the teacher during Phase One and Phase Four. I created wide reaching super-codes (based on descriptive and in vivo coding strategies) to pinpoint when the teacher supported students with close reading. I triangulated my data with student work and student survey responses and student interviews. I used the constant comparative method and created sub-codes during my first stage of analysis. My sub-coding allowed me to highlight types of scaffolding used by the teacher and aspects of the classroom (participation structures, use of physical classroom spaces, use of classroom materials, student engagement, types of close reading tasks, and types of teacher questions).

During my next stage of data analysis (Saldaña, 2009), I created categories that captured patterns in the data with more detail. I was interested in patterns concerning teacher questions about the class text and the tasks that the teacher asked the students to complete. I was also interested in how students responded to these questions and tasks. I created within-case displays for the teacher and each student to look for possible change related to student ability and student engagement. My goal was to look at the extent to which student engagement and ability changed over the course of the study in response to teacher instruction about the close reading of complex text.

Research Question 2: *How do students within a special education context view themselves as learners? Do those views change when a teacher engages them in close reading practices? What aspects of the classroom context influence whether or not students adopt these new practices and/or develop more positive academic identities? To what degree do any of the practices they are learning in their English Special Day classes transfer to their other discipline-specific classes, such as science or history–especially when they are accountable for understanding complex text?*

For each classroom, I relied mainly on student work, student and teacher interviews, student survey responses, transcripts from my classroom observations, and field notes. I wrote super-codes to highlight how students explained themselves as learners and their level of student engagement and motivation towards reading complex text and teacher and student interactions in class (the scaffolding used by the teacher and how the teacher responded to student questions or requests for help), in addition to how students explained their literacy practices, and the demands of complex text.

I used the constant comparative method and created sub-codes during my first analysis cycle. My sub-coding allowed me to highlight how students viewed themselves as learners and aspects of the classroom that influenced student identities and types of literacy practices and where the students described using particular literacy practices.

During my next stage of data analysis (Saldaña, 2009), I created categories that captured patterns in the data with more detail. I was interested in patterns concerning student descriptions of themselves as learners and their behaviors involving text (either self-described or observed). I was also curious about how teachers described the students as learners and patterns concerning student descriptions of literacy practices and their descriptions and behaviors related to complex disciplinary text. I created within-case displays for each student to look for possible change related to academic

identities and comparisons between literacy practices and their interactions with complex text in English class. My goal was to look at the extent to which student identities changed over the course of the study in response to teacher instruction about close reading with complex text.

Summary

Two teachers, one paraprofessional, and five students at two public high schools, Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School, participated in the study. Both teachers were experts who taught English Special Day classes. The students ranged in age, sex, and ethnicity. Using a formative experiment design, the study attempted to explore the possibility for teaching vulnerable readers in these classrooms how to comprehend and closely read complex disciplinary text using a series of instructional protocols that were co-designed by each teacher and myself. I examined the effectiveness of the protocols by analyzing data from teacher interviews, student interviews, student surveys, teacher surveys, student work, student performance on assessments, classroom observations, and teacher planning sessions. Given my perspective of learning and reading as a social process during which instruction leads development, I wanted to interview both teachers and students to ensure a balanced perspective on the challenge and supports present in the environment. In order to capture the social interactions in the classroom, I audio recorded two lessons so I could do a close analysis of the dialogue between students and between the students and teacher.

I gathered data in four phases during the 2018-2019 school year at both school sites. Phase One involved initial data collection at Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School. During this time, I conducted my pre-observations and had students complete a pre-survey and a pre-interview. At Playa Vista High School, I also administered a pre-reading assessment to students. At both schools, I completed my teacher pre-interviews and met with each focal teacher for planning sessions. As part of Phase Two, I observed in the focal classrooms during Unit One for four weeks and met for planning sessions with each teacher. At the end of Phase Two, each focal teacher and I met for another planning session. During Phase Three, I observed in each focal classroom during Unit Two for four weeks. I then conducted my post-observations during Phase Four and administered the post-survey and post-interviews. The teachers completed a post-interview and survey. Also, one paraprofessional completed an interview, and students completed a post-reading assessment at Playa Vista High School.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

This chapter examines the results from the study in comparison to my overall goals and research questions. The chapter includes individual cases of the two teachers, one paraprofessional, and five students in the study and an analysis of the teachers' instruction, student responses to the curriculum, and literacy practices of the students. The chapter begins with an elaborate account of each teacher's participation in and response to the curriculum. This is followed by a similar account for each student. Armed with these rich descriptions of the individual players, each research question is addressed by incorporating data from the cases of the participants.

Teacher Cases

The cases for the two teachers, Ms. Romano and Ms. O'Neil-Jones, are organized around three facets of their work: a typical day, a typical close reading lesson, and a curriculum overview.

Ms. Romano

A typical day. With a classroom shaped in a semi-circle, Ms. Romano encouraged student talk in class. She wanted students to hear one another's ideas (in addition to ideas from adults in the room) so they could engage in discussion. Ms. Romano often started class with a warm-up question–a written prompt that was projected on the wall using a document camera. She read aloud and modeled how to respond (either by asking for students to volunteer ideas or by writing synonyms of words in the prompt on the projected assignment). Students responded to the prompt individually and then turned in their assignment. Ms. Romano graded the assignment and read aloud student responses anonymously to share students' ideas. After reading aloud the responses, she returned them to the students to provide them with immediate feedback about their performance. Students had the opportunity to revise their assignments if they were unsatisfied with their grade.

During reading lessons, Ms. Romano typically read the class text aloud to students because she wanted to model fluent reading for students. Ms. Romano also projected the text using a document camera so the students could see it as she read. Additionally, students typically had their own copy of the class text so they could follow along. Ms. Romano occasionally asked students to practice reading aloud during class so she could monitor their progress, but that was the exception, not the rule.

Ms. Romano wanted her students to be engaged in the classwork and interested in what they were reading. As a history and English Special Day teacher, she supported students by developing their own questions about the text in order to promote inquiry and build knowledge. Ms. Romano wanted her students to have choices about their learning so she had them vote on the class books (for example, students selected *The Rose That Grew from Concrete* (Shakur, 2009), *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014)*, Night* (Wiesel, 2006)*,* and *The Color of Water* (McBride, 2006) for the 2018-2019 school year); she also promoted choice by allowing them to pick from menus of prompts when writing essays. Ms. Romano consulted with other staff (such as the paraprofessionals in her class, the science teacher who taught a number of the same students in a Special Day setting, and an instructional assistant who worked with her class for part of the year) to get ideas for curriculum (such as showing the film *Hidden Figures* (Chernin & Melfi, 2016)) and wanted students to be able to work with greater independence over the course of the year.

A typical close reading lesson. Ms. Romano wanted students to develop opinions about what they were reading. She often asked students whether they agreed or disagreed with the author's decisions and wanted students to build their knowledge about the world through reading. For example, students responded to the setting in fiction in order to argue how the setting of a story or poem relates to theme. Student presentations were common as well. Students were asked to present

the information they learned from texts and their essays to the whole class to share knowledge and build a writing community.

Ms. Romano often referred to the "deeper reading" she wanted her students to do. She routinely had students re-read a particular section of text and annotate using a graphic organizer or sticky notes (by defining unknown words or asking questions). She emphasized note-taking and modeled how to take notes about figurative language, character development, theme, and setting. Relatedly, she engaged students in discussion about issues that did not have a clear-cut answer and wanted to know how students came to their conclusions. Ms. Romano often modeled how students might respond through talking with Mrs. Johnson, a paraprofessional, or the instructional assistant in the classroom.

Curriculum overview. Students started the year reading a compilation of poems *The Rose That Grew from Concrete* (Shakur, 2009), before reading the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014) and viewing a film of the novel. Students considered questions related to health and fulfillment during life after reading an excerpt from Abraham H. Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs" (1943) and responded to the following,

1. How does grief reveal you? What gets revealed?
2. If you had 6-12 months to live on this earth, which people or what things or experiences would you be willing to be hurt by? Hazel sees life as getting worse, not better–do you think that this is a good way to approach life, or not? Why, or why not?
3. Why are the words "okay" and "always" considered romantic words in *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014)?

After reading the novel, students wrote either an expository essay or research essay (selecting from a series of prompts). The prompts included,

Expository Paper Prompts

John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* (2014) is about: (Choose ONE)

1. Teens with cancer who find true love. (Answer the questions–What is true love? Are Hazel and August better off for having experienced true love, or not? Why, or why not?)
2. Teens with cancer who have positive and negative experiences. (Choose one teen with cancer who has a positive experience, and one teen with cancer who has a negative experience. What conclusions can you draw? Is there deeper meaning here?)
3. Two teens who find true love, and two who don't. (Hazel and August find true love, Monica and Isaac do not. What conclusions can you draw from this? Is there deeper meaning here?)

Research Paper Prompts

(Choose ONE)

1. What is osteosarcoma?
2. How close are we to finding a cure for cancer?
3. How does cancer attack healthy organs?
4. How does cancer spread?
5. Hazel seemed so ill. Why did she outlive Augustus? (Ms. Romano Class Assignment, 1-7-19)

After reading *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014), students started Unit One of the intervention. Students read nonfiction articles and poetry related to the novel and took notes. Students presented their notes and wrote individually about how the author developed themes in the novel. Ms. Romano used formative assessment in her class and continued to monitor student progress through informal work assignments. After two weeks of Unit One, students completed a final exam for the semester. Unit One continued after the final exam, and Ms. Romano frontloaded a new class text, *Night* (Wiesel, 2006), by having students view related film clips and discuss the preface of the memoir. During the beginning of January 2019, students responded to discussion questions about

their predictions for the story. At the end of Unit One, students argued why the author decided to write the book.

Unit Two started in the beginning of the February 2019. Students continued to write daily responses to the book, annotate the text to track characters, and note examples of important language and themes. Students viewed a short clip to compare historical events related to anti-Semitism with the events in the memoir. At the end of Unit Two, students wrote about themes in the memoir.

Collaboration with Mrs. Johnson. Mrs. Johnson was a paraprofessional who supported Steven; however, she worked closely with all of the students and Ms. Romano. Having worked previously in the Air Force and a hospital setting, she supported Steven and the students using a wide-range of strategies. She thought that students benefited from explicit strategies, such as previewing books and reflecting upon their reading interests. In particular, she noticed that sometimes students looked only at the title or image on a book cover and did not know how to select books that they would want to complete reading. Mrs. Johnson further noticed differences in how the students analyzed and connected with specific texts. For example, she thought that students sometimes had a hard time connecting with books that described a more remote time period (and, conversely, benefitted when current texts were compared with the other text). Mrs. Johnson believed that students did well when they took part in shared reading activities and had the opportunity to read out-loud, such as during a popcorn reading.

During the intervention, Mrs. Johnson sometimes provided Steven with sample responses before asking him to complete the assignment. Having experienced difficulty learning to read herself, she believed that becoming (and remaining) a reader meant reading a large quantity of text on a regular basis. Mrs. Johnson, though, expressed concern about students' abilities to approach reading with maturity and to connect with books that discussed topics such as class, ethnicity, and religion.

Ms. O'Neil-Jones

A typical day. Shelves filled with school supplies, books, magazines, and photos adorned the back wall of Ms. O'Neil-Jones's classroom–completed by a charging station for student phones. A combination of desks and group tables occupied the room, along with a white board and projector. Large windows looked onto a courtyard. Ms. O'Neil-Jones elected to start the year with *Fences* (Wilson, 1986).

Early on, students grew accustomed to reading aloud each day. In the beginning of class, student volunteers (or assigned students) adopted roles and read aloud. Ms. O'Neil-Jones wrote the student names and the character names on the white board so everyone could keep track. As the text was read aloud in a shared environment, Ms. O'Neil-Jones posed questions to the class (again, asking for volunteers or calling on specific students) and encouraged students to ask their own questions or share comments about the reading during the read aloud.

With a paraprofessional who was a former English teacher, Ms. O'Neil-Jones used differentiation strategies on a daily basis. Ms. O'Neil-Jones routinely organized her class with a workshop model (taking into account the physical set-up of the room and student assignments). Students with more advanced academic skills in a particular area worked on tasks aligned with their performance-level, while students who needed practice with a different skill were able to complete tasks that would support their development.

Former students regularly stopped by her classroom–either bringing questions about assignments in other classes or cheer for a birthday celebration or recent scholarship award. In addition to 9th-grade Special Day English, Ms. O'Neil-Jones co-taught a 9th-grade English class and was attuned to the expectations for 9th-grade students, occasionally implementing lessons from her co-taught class in the Special Day class.

Ms. O'Neil-Jones did not typically conduct whole class discussion. Instead, a prototypical discussion was to have students read, answer questions, and then come together and share responses and come to a consensus response. Ms. O'Neil-Jones preferred to have students read and answer questions while she worked individually or in pairs with students in order to help them produce their response. By working with one or two students at a time, she could more easily model how she would approach a particular question or task.

A typical close reading lesson. My initial conversations with Ms. O'Neil-Jones before the study began focused on developing lessons to support student vocabulary growth and reading comprehension. She spoke about the need for students to work independently–understanding the theme or the message of a particular text. Additionally, Ms. O'Neil-Jones wanted students to be able to pay attention to the author or a particular text through connecting information about sources with their understanding of the reading. A typical close reading lesson included the teacher asking students to justify their own accounts of the text.

When reading fiction, Ms. O'Neil-Jones taught lessons about character and figurative language. Ms. O'Neil-Jones wanted her lessons to be thematically connected so her students would build knowledge about topics over the course of the year. Ideally, students would be able to identify important concepts from the text and explain connections between the different concepts. When deciding on class texts, she considered the background and interests of students in her class and the local community. Additionally, she considered the author of a text and wanted her students to hear from a range of voices.

Curriculum overview. Students started off the year writing "Where I Am From" poems, which was an assignment that required students to share about their personal background. After establishing the class culture and learning about her students, the class read *Fences* (Wilson, 1986) and completed projects in response to the play. Each day students took turns reading aloud and responding to questions about language, presumed authorial intent, and theme. Students also discussed unknown vocabulary words (either identified by the students or pre-selected).

After a break at the end of December 2018, students completed a required writing assessment for the district and started Unit One. During the unit, they focused on the following questions: Is there such thing as a just war? What is freedom? Should people sacrifice freedom in the interest of security? How is family defined? Additionally, they considered literary terms, such as allegory, anthropomorphism, metaphor, symbolism, and plot.

Ms. O'Neil-Jones began with asking students what they knew about the relationship between Iraq and the United States and emphasized how the graphic novel *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008) related to *Fences* (Wilson, 1986). After students read about an event that inspired the writing of the graphic novel, students read aloud the book and participated in a routine that students completed individually. Each day students answered questions such as what is the text saying and what in the text makes you think so. Ms. O'Neil-Jones assigned assessments periodically to understand students' progress with the curriculum.

Unit Two began with students reading about an event that inspired the writing of the book *Sea Prayer* (Hosseini, 2018). Students read a podcast transcript related to the book to learn about the context of the book and the author. The emotional content of the previous text, *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008), and the Unit Two text was difficult for some students, and Ms. O'Neil-Jones adjusted her instruction accordingly to students' academic and social-emotional responses.

Each day, the students annotated the text using sticky notes or on a handout to jot down information they learned from the text, words that needed clarification, and questions. Periodically, students completed assessments individually in order to gauge their understanding of the characters

and themes in the book. After reading, students wrote letters to the author explaining their rationale for reading the book and how the book influenced them.

Both Ms. O'Neil-Jones and Ms. Romano designed thematically connected lessons to enable their students to build knowledge over the course of the year. Both teachers made predictions about the students' academic and social-emotional needs and positioned themselves where they would be maximally helpful in the classroom. The two teachers sought to create an environment where students could build upon their own knowledge and understanding of the text to make claims and explain their unique perspectives.

My Role as Researcher

Although I tried to play the same participant observer/collaborator role in both classrooms, as the project moved along, it became clear to me that in order to maintain a credible presence in each classroom, my participation practices would diverge somewhat.

My Role in Ms. Romano's Class

Ms. Romano and I met for planning sessions between December 2018 and February 2019. Our first sessions started after Ms. Romano shared about her instructional goals for the students in mid-December 2018. She wanted students to gain knowledge through reading nonfiction text and therefore sought to have students complete a group project. As a group, students read and learned about the setting of the book (where the main characters lived and traveled for an international adventure). She wanted to know what students thought about place: If they had an opportunity to take an international trip, where would they go? Did they think that Amsterdam was a good choice? What is the history of Amsterdam and what are important aspects of the culture? Why is setting so important to the telling of a story? After meeting, I drafted possible student handouts for the project and identified nonfiction articles and poems. I shared the work with Ms. Romano and she in turn provided feedback on teacher modeling related to setting and theme and objectives for how students would work together.

After three sessions in December, Ms. Romano shared with me the students' essays from the final exam. We met again in January to discuss the remainder of Unit One. At the beginning of February, we met in person and talked over the phone to reflect on the progress students made and plan Unit Two. Overall, I aimed to share my knowledge from the academic literature about close reading and my classroom observations of the instructional goals that Ms. Romano had for her students. Through this collaborative relationship, we developed lessons that we believed would be appropriate for students and would foster their ability to read and respond to complex text. While I was in the classroom for observations, my role began as a participant observer and migrated to a participant observer who also spoke with students on occasion if they had questions about assignments.

My Role in Ms. O'Neil-Jones's Class

When working with Ms. O'Neil-Jones, I inquired about her objectives for the year and shared ideas that I thought were related to these objectives. For example, during our initial informal discussions, she explained her goal was for students to improve their understanding of vocabulary in complex text. Consequently, I presented lessons and ideas for organizing her curriculum that would support vocabulary development, such as having students use context clues for unknown words and identifying conceptual ties between vocabulary in the readings. After informal discussions at the beginning of the year, we initially planned to focus the intervention on *Fences* (Wilson, 1986) and *The Circuit* (Jiménez, 1997); however, due to scheduling changes and Ms. O'Neil-Jones's assessment of student performance, we decided to use *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008) and *Sea Prayer* (Hosseini, 2018). Ms. O'Neil-Jones had never taught either of the books before and obtained funding to purchase these books through a DonorsChoose.org grant.

As with my meetings with Ms. Romano, I shared with Ms. O'Neil-Jones professional articles about the CCSS and research articles about close reading related to our planning. I also prepared sample unit outlines and materials with Ms. O'Neil-Jones. Ms. O'Neil-Jones shared with me a sample unit resource for *Fences* (Wilson, 1986) in October 2018 and sample lessons related to metaphor, plots, vocabulary, and character development. Before the intervention, she also shared sample student handouts and readings. During our planning sessions, Ms. O'Neil-Jones and I discussed areas of the text that could be challenging and lessons that appeared appropriate given the text and her objectives for students. We monitored student progress by reviewing student work and reflecting upon the lessons that she taught. During the many classroom observations, I aimed to act as a participant observer. Over time, I also took on the role of answering questions from students about daily classroom assignments.

Student Experiences

Playa Vista High School

Luke. When I first observed Ms. Romano's classroom at Playa Vista High School in October 2018, Luke had completed a response to the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014), which was one of the books that the class voted to read at the beginning of the year. The classroom had a "T" shape, and Luke sat in the far left corner in a separate "wing" alone–with the exception of one other student.

During my first observation of the class, Luke and his peers wrote about their opinion on "Hierarchy of Needs" (Maslow, 1943), which was a nonfiction text referenced in the novel. Luke felt comfortable asking for additional help if he had questions and worked steadily to complete his response. Students later took turns reading aloud during a "popcorn" read, and Luke cheered on one of his classmates so she felt at ease when reading.

Ms. Romano often worked individually with Luke during class. They had a good relationship. When talking informally to me, she spoke highly of the student's academic performance and thought he would be a good fit for the study. She thought he had made significant growth academically during his time thus far in high school and could excel if he was provided with the appropriate type of support in class. Luke earned a Level 1 (out of 4 possible levels) score (or 2428) on his SBAC exam in eighth-grade, indicating low performance in middle school.

After agreeing to be in the study, Luke met with me at lunch in order to complete his pre-assessments, pre-survey, and pre-interview. He initially rushed through the reading comprehension pre-test, but revisited the test to check his responses before turning in his work. He earned 0/16 on his reading comprehension pre-test (indicating his comprehension level was below a fourth-grade reading level), but read aloud the majority of the fluency passage with ease. Luke scored 95/164 on his pre-survey, indicating low to moderate reading motivation and engagement. In response to the short-answer survey questions, Luke wrote that the *Magic Tree House* (Osborne, 2008) book series was his favorite, and he described his passion for video games and YouTube.

At first, Luke was not interested in participating in the interviews. However, he changed his mind after thinking over his decision for a few days. During his pre-interview, he continued to reference the *Magic Tree House* (Osborne, 2008) series. Luke expressed an awareness of his low reading comprehension performance (arguing that his favorite book was on a "third-grade" reading level). He discussed additional books that he enjoyed reading, such as the Tagalog dictionary (so he could practice the language with his maternal grandmother) and a book about butterflies. He connected his interest with the book about butterflies ("[It] tells you about every single butterfly… 500 butterflies in there") to visiting a butterfly habitat at Six Flags (Luke Pre-interview, 11-6-19). When asked why he found it fun to read the butterfly book, he said he liked to learn about where butterflies live and what they eat (Luke Pre-interview, 11-6-19).

During his interview, he also described his familiarity with a range of books–including the *Goosebumps* (Stine, 1992) series and *I am Malala* (Yousafzai & Lamb, 2015)–and recounted events from *I am Malala* with specific detail. When asked about the strategies he used when reading complex text, he did not respond. He similarly did not respond when asked to discuss his reading motivation. Nevertheless, I was overall impressed with Luke's ability to remember specific dates related to the study interviews. During class, he showed a similar attention to detail by remembering when the class typically took breaks during block period days. He would sometimes organize the other students so they could play computer games together during the breaks–showing an initiative to bring people together.

Luke seemed to be highly motivated by his grades. He was accustomed to earning the maximum number of points for his "warm-up" writing responses and expressed concern during the intervention curriculum when he earned partial credit. He took advantage of the opportunity to revise his work (earning a plus instead of a check) after being initially frustrated. Overall, Luke's pre-assessments illustrated that he had a "middle school" level of reading fluency and low reading comprehension performance.

Learning about the role of setting. Unit One focused on understanding the role of setting when telling a story. At the beginning of the intervention, Luke had a B in Ms. Romano's class. After reading nonfiction articles and poetry in response to the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014) for two weeks, students wrote about the role of setting and how the author developed themes through the setting. After the first two weeks of Unit One curriculum, students had a Winter Break and two weeks for final exams. The final exam for Ms. Romano's class assessed content from September through December. Students had six class periods to respond to questions individually, review text they read earlier in the year (including a video clip, poetry, articles, and *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014)) and write one typed essay after reviewing the following two choices:

> (1) Between Tupac Shakur's *The Rose That Grew from Concrete* and John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars,* why did you like one reading more than the other? Be specific. Refer to the reading for examples in your body paragraphs. Cite your examples.
> (2) Select one text you read this semester that you think future 11th- and 12th-grade students would enjoy reading. Why do you think future students would enjoy reading _____ (insert name of text)? Be specific. Refer to the text for examples in your body paragraphs. Cite your examples.

Students were allowed to refer back to the class texts and notes in their binder. They also had the opportunity to ask either the teacher or another staff member for help (there were three other adults present in the room; two paraprofessionals every day and one instructional assistant part-time–in addition to myself). Luke selected Option 1 and compared the novel to the compilation of poems. He wrote:

> In this essay I will explain why I like The fault in our stars more than The rose that Grew from Concrete. I watched the movie the fault in our stars and read the story. I found both pretty interesting. I understand the book and the movie better than The Rose that grew from concrete. In my opinion, I think the Rose collection of poems is just about roses that grew in concrete, which doesn't really happen.
>
> My favorite part of the movie and the story The Fault in Our Stars is when Hazel, Augustus, and Isaac were having a fun prank at throwing eggs. I found the picture of their prank of throwing eggs in the book on page 146. Me seeing them doing their prank was kind of funny. Even though it's funny in the movie, you shouldn't do that because it's not funny, it's illegal, and it's not a right thing to do.

At the end of the book on page 261, Augustus died since his cancer stopped his heart. It was sad to see him die. I thought that Augustus was funny, awesome, and cool. Hope he's doing well in heaven. I'm sure that Augustus is thinking about Hazel. I'm sure Hazel is thinking about Augustus in her heart.

In conclusion, I think both the story and the movie are both great to experience. I'm sure my parents and brothers would want to read this book in the future. Since I experienced it I think the book was cool, funny, sad, and great to watch and read. (Luke Class Assignment, 1-15-19)

In his response, Luke referenced one of the two focal texts. When describing his opinion about the poems, he provided a personal response to the book, instead of using specific evidence from the text. But he argued clearly for why he thought the novel was interesting. Luke's pattern of including both personal responses and direct references to the text continued during the second unit.

Responding to the Holocaust and genocide. After Unit One, Luke and his peers periodically drafted written responses to the memoir *Night* (Wiesel, 2006). One challenging assignment involved explaining how a theme related to the setting of the memoir.

Q: Explain what you think is the meaning of the word "resistance" at Auschwitz.

Luke provided an accurate description of the character in the memoir, but did not fully respond to the prompt. He received a check (2/3) on this assignment.

A: Elie wouldn't just leave the camp. I think he should clean the mess up. He wants the camp to be clean there were some rules he needed to follow. At Auschwitz he could've been killed, he should wait patiently sometimes. He should not rush of doing stuff. (Luke Class Assignment, 2-15-19)

Luke made an indirect argument that it is not possible to "resist" while living in a concentration camp and that the only way for Elie to survive is to follow the rules set forth by the Nazis. He made references to the text when he said that Elie had rules that he needed to follow and that Auschwitz was a place where Elie could have been killed.

Later during the unit, Luke again included a personal response when writing about events in the memoir.

Q: Add to your timeline after reviewing your annotations

A: I learned a couple characters in my little booklet. I have like Moishe, Elie, Elie's father, Mrs. Schactner and Dr. Mengele. In the beginning of the book, these people went to Transylvania, a forest, and so on. I'm sure that these guys had fun and discovered something new. (Luke Class Assignment, 2-19-19)

Luke referred back to his notes and identified the characters correctly, but had difficulty understanding the inhuman circumstances related to the Holocaust.

Over time, Luke's understanding of the overall context of the memoir improved. Luke shared another personal response to the memoir during an activity that asked students to write a response to the following question,

Q: Write your response to this section of the book. You might also list questions or comments on this part of the book.

Luke earned a plus (3/3) for this response. He wrote,

A: What I'm saying in this book is bad! They're hanging people in the air and killing them. It's like they're doing hangman with real people instead of stick figures. It's crazy to hang someone and kill them. (Luke Class Assignment, 2-22-19)

When describing what life was like for people in the memoir, he used an analogy to express his opinion and communicated the inhuman conditions that existed during the Holocaust–making a specific reference to the text.

Generally, Luke was responsive to Ms. Romano's scaffolding. For example, later that week, Ms. Romano assigned students to write a "Think Piece" after reading just over half the memoir. Students had two to three class periods to complete the assignment individually and were asked to pick two themes. Luke earned 3/3 on the assignment.

> Q:
> 1. Re-read pages 1-77 [Skim and scan].
> 2. Review the handouts in your binder (e.g., warm-ups, your booklet, and sticky notes).
> 3. Identify two themes that you think are present in the memoir so far. Explain how you think each theme is developed in the memoir.
> A: I'm thinking of the theme of "survival" means live longer and not die. Survival means to outlast everyone and not worry about others. It developed in the memoir because like Elie Wiesel he's trying to survive being in the camp that is nasty.
> Horror means like a scary person or a nightmare. It also means for you to feel scared and frightened. It develops in the story because Elie was feeling scared trying to find a way out of the smelly camp. The jobs that Elie is doing is lifting rocks and doing other dirty work. It's like he is having a nightmare. (Luke Class Assignment, 2-26-19)

Luke referred back to his notes where he had written down possible themes in the book. He took these notes over the course of several weeks when Ms. Romano led discussions about possible themes and modeled taking notes about theme. After referring to his notes when responding to the prompt, he described two themes accurately and included specific details from the memoir in order to explain how the themes developed.

> Luke subsequently completed an assessment at the end of the second reading unit.
> Q: What do you think is the role of hope and optimism during horrendous times? Is optimism always a positive influence? Draw evidence from *Night* in your response.
> A: I'm thinking that we need hope all the time. You should have faith in god, especially when you're in a death camp. If you don't, you may die quick. You should always have faith in god wherever you go, especially when you're somewhere bad. It would be challenging if you don't have faith in god. Like if I was in a death camp. It would be lonely and sad. Since I living myself and I'll miss my family and get sick. (Luke Class Assignment, 3-4-19)

Here, Luke imagined that he was in the same situation as the main character in the book. He makes indirect references to the memoir by discussing a death camp and the importance of faith.

After the two reading units. After Unit Two, Luke wrote an essay about the role of God in *Night* (Wiesel, 2006), which was a topic he wrote briefly about during the unit. He chose this topic out of four different options. His response featured direct references to the text, such as direct quotations from the memoir to support his argument and a source for his citations.

Additionally, Luke completed a post-reading assessment for comprehension and fluency. When reading the fluency passage aloud, he still read with minimal errors. At the end of the intervention, Luke also still had a B in Ms. Romano's class. His post-survey showed a slight increase in his reading motivation and engagement (97/164) indicating a moderate level of motivation and engagement, but his reading comprehension score remained at 0/16 during the post-test indicating his comprehension was still below a fourth-grade level. His favorite book and websites remained the same; however, when asked about possible topics to teach, he referenced math and gym during the post-test. When talking about his motivation towards reading complex text and strategies that he uses when reading, Luke explained that he has no choice but to keep reading complex text. He said that

sometimes he did not try his hardest, but his main strategy when reading was to persist (Luke Post-interview, 3-21-19)

Summary. All in all, close reading for Luke included a combination of personal responses and direct references to the text. His reading performance was inconsistent: Luke struggled with identifying accurate details and themes from the reading comprehension pre-test and post-test, but performed at a higher-level during class assignments. The scaffolds that Ms. Romano provided–such as asking students to take notes about theme during Unit Two–were effective when Luke was asked to write about themes in the memoir.

Luke made progress over time in his written work. In response to open prompts from Unit One, he included evidence from the text when supporting his argument and had clear claims; however, he was inconsistent in his use of direct quotations from the text. He also did not consistently integrate his world knowledge with the evidence from the text when developing his argument for a particular claim.

Steven. Steven was quiet during my first observation in Ms. Romano's classroom and worked closely with a paraprofessional. Sitting near the window, he worked on his assignments alone most of the time and spoke with Mrs. Johnson, a paraprofessional, when he had a question about the work. Steven typically did not volunteer answers during whole class discussions unless he was called upon. Steven had a good relationship with both Mrs. Johnson and Ms. Romano. Having been homeschooled during elementary and middle school, Ms. Romano thought his parents were happy that he was able to work so closely with Mrs. Johnson. Both Mrs. Johnson and Ms. Romano often spoke about Steven's interest in the orchestra and band–he had a recent solo for orchestra and on most days after school, he could be found practicing his instruments. Ms. Romano mentioned that he was an active musician even though his parents were not.

After agreeing to be in the study, Steven met with me at lunch in November to complete his pre-reading assessments and pre-survey. After two sessions, he was not interested in continuing to meet during lunch, so we met for his pre-interview during Ms. Romano's class in early December–with the permission of his parents.

Before starting the first unit, Steven had a B in Ms. Romano's class. Similar to Luke, Steven earned 0/16 on his reading comprehension pre-test indicating comprehension performance below a fourth-grade level, but read aloud the majority of the fluency passage with ease. His written responses to the reading comprehension questions were not fully developed enough to earn credit on the NAEP rubric. Steven scored 123/164 on his pre-survey, indicating a moderate level of reading motivation and engagement. In response to the short-answer survey questions, Steven wrote that he did not have a favorite book or author. He also wrote that he was knowledgeable about food and would teach about music, if ever given the choice. Steven wrote "a lot" in response to the question "How do you like to spend free time," which indicated that he may not have understood the question. Due to unanticipated time constraints, I was not able to ask Steven all of the interview questions; for some of the questions that I did ask, he did not have responses. Steven, though, did mention that he enjoyed the book *I am Malala* (Yousafzai & Lamb, 2015) (which, like Luke, was a book he read earlier in high school), as well as books about cooking and religion.

Aside from reading, Steven relished being able to take breaks during the longer block periods in Ms. Romano's class and valued his lunch periods. He remembered me by name after we were only introduced a few times and expressed interest in understanding my role in the class. Overall, Steven's pre-fluency assessment revealed that he had a "middle school" level of reading fluency and low reading comprehension performance.

Leveraging multiple forms of evidence. When participating in the first unit, Steven read about the setting of Amsterdam in groups after reading *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014) and re-

read poetry from Tupac Shakur when considering how setting contributes to theme in stories. He presented his notes from a nonfiction article and a poem to the class with ease and later wrote an essay about Tupac Shakur during the final exam in January after selecting from two options. In his essay, he argued that he preferred to read Tupac Shakur's poems more than the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014) and included specific references to the text. He earned a grade of 9/10 for his essay.

> A: Select one text you read this semester that you think future 11th- and 12th-grade students would enjoy reading. Why do you think future students would enjoy reading _____ (insert name of text)? Be specific. Refer to the text for examples in your body paragraphs. Cite your examples.
> Q: In English, we read and evaluated two books, Tupac Shakur's The Rose that grew from Concrete and John Green's The Fault in Our Stars. The Fault in Our Stars is a good book and easy to read, but the situation is about teens coping with a terminal illness-Isaac loses his eyesight and Hazel and Augustus develop a beautiful relationship, then Augustus dies. I am a teenager who found the book too depressing. I therefore chose to write about Tupac's book of poems. It is a book of poems, whose author was a street poet that delivered many messages. Most of all, it forces the reader to examine himself. Most 11th and 12th graders would probably prefer to read Tupac's poems. This essay is about Tupac Shakur and his relationship to his poetry, and the message he wanted he to leave to the world. (Steven Class Assignment, 1-15-19)

After introducing his argument, Steven provided background information about the author and supported his argument with evidence from the text. He provided an in-depth analysis of the poem, which featured an analysis of the meaning of the word "rose." Steven wrote,

> A: The rose is Tupac and is life. As the rose is a beautiful flower. (Steven Class Assignment, 1-15-19)

A central part of his close reading included an emphasis on the poem and figurative language.

After reading *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014) and responding to text from the beginning of the school year, Steven and the other students prepared to read the memoir *Night* (Wiesel, 2006). Ms. Romano's instruction remained focused on the setting of text and themes of compassion in literature during Unit One. Steven noted the context of the memoir and information that the author shared in the preface of the text when responding to a class assignment.

> Q: How do you think religion or a belief system can influence a person's way of life? Be sure to use evidence from the text in your response.
> A: The experience Wiesel had to endure losing nearly all of his family in the Holocaust made him question the existence of God. How his faith helps him get through challenging times and overcome him fears. (Steven Class Assignment, 1-29-19)

Steven's response indicated his understanding of the events that occurred during World War II and the author's experience during that time.

Steven subsequently considered themes of apathy and intolerance related to *Night* (Wiesel, 2006) and referenced his own life. He responded to the following writing prompt, earning a full credit.

> Q: What happens when you don't have feelings for other people?

Steven relied on his own experiences and wrote,

> A: Bad things can happen when you are apathetic about the human plight. Apathy should not exist. It's dangerous. Apathy numbs you to negative circumstances that other humans are experiencing, and causes them to not react by helping them out. If

> you see blind person crossing a busy street you would help him to cross safely. If you have apathy you wouldn't help him at all. You wouldn't care. (Steven Class Assignment, 1-31-19)

Steven's response did not expressly connect his understanding of theme of apathy in his own life with the text, but included an explicit example to support his argument.

In addition to analyzing the context of the memoir, the students in Ms. Romano's class considered issues related to the writer's craft. After reading the first few pages of the memoir, Steven responded to the following prompt and anchored his response in the reading.

> Q: Why do you think Wiesel included the following sentence as the first sentence in the memoir? ("They called him Moishe the Beadle, as if his entire life he never had a surname.")
>
> A: The author begins his book introducing a character without a proper last name. He does this, because Moishe is a religious man… Besides the word beadle meaning a bug, the word "beadle" is a word that would mean some kind of deacon in a church in Jewish faith. (Steven Class Assignment, 1-29-19)

In his response, Steven researched the definition of "beadle" and argued why Wiesel placed a particular emphasis on religion at the beginning of the memoir.

A few weeks later, Steven connected his own experience again with the main character's interest in religion when writing a response to a class assignment–leveraging both text from the memoir and his world knowledge.

> Q: How does Eliezer describe himself? Identify what connections, if any, exist between you and Eliezer.
>
> A: Elie Wiesel describes himself as a student of the faith. Like me, Elie was interested in the deeper aspects of his faith. (Steven Class Assignment, 2-1-19)

Steven's quote from the memoir describes the main character's interest in religion. Throughout Unit One, close reading for Steven meant a focus on the text *and* his own experiences and knowledge of the world.

Purpose and the craft of writing. During Unit Two, students continued to read the memoir *Night* (Wiesel, 2006) and deepened their analysis of the writer's craft and literary devices (such as theme). Steven continued to integrate the text with his own knowledge when considering why Elie Wiesel chose the word "night" as the title of the memoir. Steve wrote,

> A: Wiesel chose the word "night" as the title because night is often used as a representation of bad things. (Steven Class Assignment, 2-4-19)

After including his explanation, he brought in a quote from the Bible to argue that night has a negative connotation and acts as a metaphor in both the memoir and the Bible. Steven wrote,

> A: [N]ight to represent a period of chaos occurring in his [Elie's] family and his race. (Steven Class Assignment, 2-4-19)

Steven's responses early in the intervention included direct quotations from the class text and outside text. He also was attuned to the author Elie Wiesel's language use; for example, he took notes about personification,

> A: "[D]eath, which was settling in all around me, silently, gently" (p. 89). (Steven Class Assignment, 1-29-19)

As students worked through the intervention curriculum during Unit Two, Steven was responsive to Ms. Romano's modeling. Periodically, she provided mini-lessons about how to annotate the text using sticky notes. Steven annotated as he read: For example, he noted the word "conflagration" and had a reminder to "look it up." At times he wrote down his personal response to

the text. When the main character was forced to leave his home, Steven wrote about his shock and disbelief. Other times, Steven wrote a short summary to remind himself of the key events,

> A: Mrs. Schacter forsaw the deaths of her sons and the other people burning. (Steven Class Assignment, 2-7-19)

Steven's response to Ms. Romano's instruction meant he was focused on the memoir and his own responses to, and comprehension of, the text.

Steven continued to rely on evidence from the text when forming his own opinions about the memoir. Ms. Romano asked students to decide which words they thought were important. She provided the prompt,

> Q: Re-read the text. Identify a specific word or phrase from the text that you think is important.

Steven responded,

> A: "Waiflike" it's referring to his type of shyness. It's a shyness that made people like him; not a shyness that caused people to shun him. (Steven Class Assignment, 2-7-19)

Steven made the decision to compare the main character with the other characters in the book and explained the specific meaning of "shyness" based on the events in the memoir and his understanding of the personality trait.

At the end of the unit, Steven developed his opinion about a major theme in the book. Ms. Romano provided the following prompt,

> Q: What do you think is the role of hope and optimism during horrendous times? Is optimism always a positive influence? Draw evidence from *Night* in your response.

Steven argued,

> A: Even horrendous times as long as you're alive. A person can pick out things that will give them hop[e]. For example, Rabbi Eliahu had a very positive countenance. Despite the ordeals and deprivation, his continued to radiate his innocence (p. 90). He probably gave hope to many people around him. He was the Rabbi in Buna. (Steven Class Assignment, 3-4-19)

Steven argued that hope is possible during dark times and referenced a character from the memoir who demonstrated a tremendous amount of resilience.

After the intervention. For Steven's final essay after Unit Two, he displayed thoroughness in writing a five-page response to a four-paragraph assignment titled, "About Elie's Transformation."

> Q: Wiesel argues that he "changed" on page 39. How do you think Wiesel changed? Why do you think he changed?
>
> A: How did Elie Wiesel change? Anyone would change if he is forced to experience trauma of all five senses, day after day, for a long period of time. In Elie's case, he and his village was forced to relocate from his hometown of Sighet to several concentration camps. In this essay, I will attempt to merge topics 1 and 2 so I can easily express Elie's change from beginning to his liberation. (Steven Class Assignment, 3-14-19)

After his introduction, he provided additional history and background about the context of the memoir. Steven discussed the interactions between the characters in the memoir, providing an in-depth explanation of the relationship between the main character and a supporting character, Moishe. Steven wrote,

> A: Let us, however, backtrack a little bit… Moishe the Beadle becomes his teacher who helps him study the Kabbalah… So Elie starts out being a pious devote student of his religion. However, when the Germans came, he can no longer study as he wished. The Germans had other plans. (Steven Class Assignment, 3-14-19)

Steven grounded his argument in the memoir and periodically paraphrased the text. Overall, Steven's argument for why and how Wiesel changes as a result of his experiences during the Holocaust was rooted in historical information that Steven gleaned from the memoir and his knowledge about Germany's role during the war. He was methodical in building his argument for why the Holocaust had such a horrendous impact on Wiesel's life.

Aside from the classwork, Steven met with me after school in March and completed his post-assessment for reading comprehension and fluency. His reading comprehension score increased from 0/16 to 3/16 (still indicating a comprehension level below fourth grade). At pre-test, in response to an item detail question that asked him to infer character traits from the story details to provide a description, he confused the character's need for food in the beginning of the story with working in a kitchen. At post-test, he provided a response that suggested partial understanding of the character, but his response was unclear.

> Q: Describe what kind of person the merchant is. Give one detail from the story to support your answer.
>
> A: A merchant is a sea creature. (Steven Post-Assessment, 3-8-19)

His response nodded to the merchant's role working in a global context as a "sea merchant," but needed additional context. When reading the fluency passage aloud, he still read with minimal errors during the post-test and his post-survey showed a slight increase in his reading motivation and engagement (124/164), indicating a moderate level of motivation and engagement. In his pre-survey Steven did not mention a favorite book. Steven, however, did mention a book during his post-survey (he noted an interest in a book he recently read for his monthly book assignment in Ms. Romano's class). Overall, he maintained a B in Ms. Romano's class throughout the year.

Summary. Close reading for Steven included direct references to the in-class text, personal references from his own life, and texts he read on his own. Both his written work and post-reading assessments indicated growth, but also reflected that he still had challenges. As evidence of growth, his written work was more thorough at post-test in comparison to pre-test, and his responses to questions about specific details from the story illustrated progress. Remaining challenges were indicated by his overall low score on the post-assessment for reading comprehension. Working closely with Mrs. Johnson and Ms. Romano, Steven developed a sense of what he liked and disliked when reading stories and showed an ability to weave his life experiences with the events in the memoir*, Night* (Wiesel, 2006).

Elizabeth. Ms. Romano thought that Elizabeth would be a good fit for the study because of her interest in reading. Elizabeth was not on a diploma track and was enrolled in English and history as her main academic classes. During my initial observation, Elizabeth had an emphatic response during the discussion about John Green and the "Hierarchy of Needs" (Maslow, 1943) text. When asked whether students agreed with the hierarchy, Elizabeth argued that the hierarchy was unfair. She earned 130/164 for her pre-survey, indicating a moderate level of reading motivation and engagement. Her reading comprehension pre-test was 13/16 indicating a comprehension level of at least fourth grade. She earned 100% for the multiple-choice questions, but did not answer the written questions. During her pre-survey and pre-interview, she mentioned her interest in a range of books including the *Warriors* (Hunter, 2015) series–a book she recommended to her mom as well. She was a fan of watching YouTube, playing video games, using the computer, and reading. During lunch, she often worked on projects for her graphic design class. Elizabeth expressed interest in *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014) and occasionally chatted with Ms. Romano about the book before class.

Building on reading engagement during Unit One. Elizabeth received instructional support from an instructional assistant who supported the class on a part-time basis. The instructional assistant would help the students gather their materials in the morning before leaving to help the

students in the neighboring class. She would then return and help for the remaining 20 to 30 minutes of the period. Elizabeth sometimes received writing support from the instructional assistant. During Unit One, Elizabeth chose to compare the two books the class had read so far and earned 8/10. In her essay titled "Why I like Tupac's Poems More" Elizabeth wrote,

> A: I like Tupac Shakur's The Rose that Grew in Concrete more than The Fault in Our Stars because I like the poems better. I feel like they have more meaning behind them. Tupac's poems have deeper meaning in them, and I like this. In this essay, I will explain why I like Tupac's poems more than John Green's The Fault in Our Stars." After her introduction, she included two body paragraphs with specific examples why the poems appeal to her more. Her first body paragraph included one poem from the compilation that was particularly memorable. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 1-14-19)

Elizabeth argued,

> A: One of Tupac's poems that I like is, "The Power of a Smile." I like this poem because I like the meaning in it. The meaning behind the poem is, even when life is hard, sometimes little things can help us. In this poem, it seems that a smile from a loved one can warm our hearts, even when life is cold.
>
> > The power of a gun can kill
> > And the power of fire can burn
> > And the power of wind can chill
> > And the power of the mind can learn
> > The power of anger can rage inside
> > Until it tears you apart
> > But the power of a smile,
> > Especially yours, can heal a frozen Heart. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 1-14-19)

In addition to using evidence from the book of poems, she included evidence from her own research about the poet. In her second body paragraph, she argued,

> A: In the poem, Tupac dedicates it to a woman named Renee. I searched on the internet to find out who she is. He also dedicated another poem to her called, Genesis (The Rebirth of My Heart), where he refers to her as a friend and a love. Her is a link to her twitter. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 1-14-19)

Elizabeth wrote that part of her interest in the poem stemmed from her interest in the poet and his inspiration for writing. As a result, she referenced information from her own research about the poet's life and possible inspiration for writing.

After the final exam in January, Ms. Romano asked students to consider ideas related to the memoir, *Night (*Wiesel, 2006). When asked whether she agreed or disagreed with the statement "humans have an obligation to support others in need," Elizabeth wrote,

> A: I agree with the following statement "humans have an obligation to support others in need." Because like when someone is crying other people are going to ask what's wrong. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 1-23-19)

She referenced an example from everyday life to support her claim. Elizabeth considered questions about the writer's craft as well.

> Q: Why do you think Wiesel included the following sentence as the first sentence in the memoir? ("They called him Moishe the Beadle, as if his entire life he never had a surname.")

A: The author begins his book introducing a character without a proper last name. He does this because maybe he doesn't have a last name or a family. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 1-29-19)

In her response, Elizabeth offered a plausible explanation for why the author made an artistic decision.

Elizabeth later considered the decisions the author made when writing the book. The prompt included,

Q: Why did Wiesel choose to title the memoir night?

Elizabeth wrote,

A: Wiesel chose the word "night" as the title because maybe it was a dark time in his life. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 2-4-19)

In her response, she connected the author's experiences with her interpretation of the title. Elizabeth went on to write her opinion of the author's purpose. The prompt asked students to respond to the following question,

Q: What do you think was Wiesel's purpose in writing *Night?*

A: Wiesel's purpose of this book is so people won't forget. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 1-29-19)

Elizabeth thus drew upon her knowledge of history and the memoir in order to develop her arguments about the writer's craft and the author. Both sources of evidence are present in her response about *Night* (Wiesel, 2006).

Inhumane conditions during the Holocaust. During Unit Two, Elizabeth was engaged in reading *Night* (Wiesel, 2006) independently and responding to and asking questions about the main character's family in order to make sure she had the correct information about the book. On a sticky note, she continued to mark a section that stood out to her.

A: This is really interesting. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 2-7-19)

She also wrote about her impression of the book overall.

Q: Re-read the text. Identify a specific word or phrase from the text that you think is important. Explain why you think the word or phrase is important.

With support from the instructional assistant, Elizabeth identified the word Zionism in the memoir and explained her rationale.

A: This word is important because the elders wanted to protect the future of a Jewish nation. They didn't concern themselves with their own individual fates. It was about saving their heritage. It stands for hope for the future. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 2-7-19)

At times, Elizabeth avoided writing tasks, but she benefitted from one-on-one support from the teacher and other staff.

Over time, Elizabeth's reactions to the text became more explicit. Ms. Romano had students describe the conditions in the camp during a writing exercise at the beginning of class in early February. Elizabeth earned full credit for her responses. She wrote,

A: The conditions at the camp were depressing and terrible. The Jewish prisoners saw the chimneys and people dying, including children. Prisoners did not have enough food, so they were starving. They were living in dirty conditions and were not taking showers. Mr. Wiesel was separated from his mother and his sisters. He did not see his mother and sister again. It was all a nightmare to survive in. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 2-11-19)

After providing her interpretation of the setting, she summarized her viewpoint about the story so far– responding to the inhuman conditions that Elie Wiesel and others endured.

When asked to write a response to the memoir, Elizabeth had her own opinion and clearly explained how her opinion was similar to the opinion of the main character.

> Q: Write your responses to this section of the book. You might also list questions and comments on this part of the book.
>
> A: I agree with Elie's thoughts in this part of the book. He is disagreeing about people praying and celebrating because there is not much to look forward to, even though it's the new year. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 2-12-19)

Students subsequently considered significant themes from the memoir. Elizabeth identified the themes of survival–paraphrasing events in the memoir. She went to argue that "love of family" was an additional theme. Elizabeth wrote,

> A: Elie really loves his father but he got separated form [from] the rest of his family and he doesn't want to leave his father. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 2-26-19)

Again Elizabeth directed the reader to an event that occurred in the memoir.

Responses post-intervention. In contrast to Steven, Elizabeth's responses were succinct. During a writing exercise after the end of Unit Two, Ms. Romano asked student to complete the following,

> Q: Review *Night* and the handouts in your binder. How would you explain the book to someone who has not read it?

Elizabeth wrote,

> A: Elie Wiesel's book is about his time in several concentration camps. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 3-6-19)

After Unit Two, student wrote essays; however, Elizabeth's response was incomplete even though she developed a clear initial argument. Elizabeth wrote,

> A: In Elie Wiesel's Night Elie says that a corpse was contemplating him. He's talking about himself, but he wrote it like he was talking about another person. He also says, "the look in his eyes as he gazed at me has never left me." In this essay I will explain what that means. (Elizabeth Class Assignment, 3-7-19)

In this response, Elizabeth broke down a complex phrase in the memoir–paraphrasing the author's argument. Even though she did not go on to complete her argument, her initial claim was clear.

Summary. Elizabeth improved in her ability to form arguments in which she stated her opinions of the text clearly and presented evidence to support them. Responding to historical events during World War II, Elizabeth rooted her arguments in the memoir and her own beliefs. At the end of the intervention, she had a D. Elizabeth had a moderate level of reading motivation and engagement, with a slight decrease in her pre-survey score (127/164). At post-test, she only completed 3 of the 6 multiple choice questions on the reading comprehension assessment, but earned 100% again for the questions she answered. Her post-survey indicated that her interest in reading remained throughout the intervention, although clearly written work was challenging at times.

Clinton High School

Recall that only two students from Ms. O'Neil-Jones's class, Nina and Lucia, opted to become full participants in the study. Each provided a rich body of evidence that allowed me to create an elaborate account of her experience.

Nina. Nina started off the year with a fourth-grade reading level according to the QRI-6. Nina had an interest in horses, animals, and art books. She felt like she knew a lot about horses, food, and technology. Whether she was helping with classwork or herbal remedy tips for a sick classmate, Nina appeared to enjoy helping others and sharing information. Nina's score of 638 (equivalent to a third-grade reading level using a Lexile scale) on the Accelerated Reading assessment in October 2018 increased to 700 (equivalent to a fourth-grade reading level using a Lexile scale) in January 2019.

Her pre-survey indicated a moderate level of reading motivation and engagement (121/164). Nina's SBAC reading score from eighth grade for ELA was 2470, indicating that she was in the Level 1 achievement range. She had an A at the end of the first semester in January 2019. She often read aloud in English and science class and appeared moderately confident doing so. During her pre-interview, she expressed familiarity with a range of books and literacy practices. With English as her home language, one of her strategies when reading complex text included using Google Translator.

Supporting interpretations with evidence. In January, the beginning of the second semester, Ms. O'Neil-Jones had students read the graphic novel *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008) as a whole class text. Each day students responded individually to the following questions,

> Q: What do you think the text is saying? What is the text makes you think so?

Nina honed in on the plot and compared two characters in the book. She wrote,

> A: The females went after some horses and Zill was going to meet up with them later because he can't run like them (p. 71-84). It says it in the text and it's shown in pictures. (Nina Class Assignment, No Date)

As students continued with Unit One and became accustomed to writing responses to the book, Nina's responses became more developed.

> Q: What do you think the text is saying?
>
> A: Zill, Noor, and the black bear were in a fight to attack the bear. (Nina Class Assignment, No Date)

She also responded to the question,

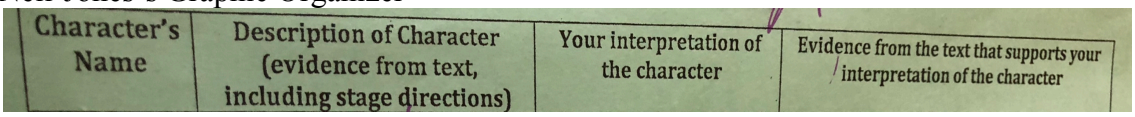
> Q: What in the text makes you think so?
>
> A: From the pictures Zill and the bear fell out of the window. (Nina Class Assignment, No Date)

Over time, Nina included additional evidence from the text to support her claims.

Ms. O'Neil-Jones provided lessons about how to describe specific characters from the story using a graphic organizer (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Ms. O'Neil-Jones's Graphic Organizer



Character's Name	Description of Character (evidence from text, including stage directions)	Your interpretation of the character	Evidence from the text that supports your interpretation of the character

Nina wrote that one of the characters, Safa, was "mean, leading, and smart." She then provided her interpretation of the character. Nina paraphrased the novel,

> A: She is becoming alpha… taking Zill's job. (Nina Class Assignment, 1-28-19)

Finally, she provided evidence from the text in order to support her interpretation of the character.

> A: Leads the attack on horses. She needs food so she is embracing freedom. (Nina Class Assignment, 1-28-19)

Nina broke her arm at the end of Unit One, so she needed help with writing. At the end of Unit One in February, Nina selected from a menu of options for writing a response to the book. The prompts included four options,

> 1. Rewrite the ending of the text. For example, imagine the lions survive. Write a 1-2 page story using either a short story or graphic novel format. Include a 2 paragraph reflection. Be sure to compare and contrast your ending with the author's ending.
> 2. Write the next chapter of the graphic novel. Write a 1-2 page chapter using either a short story or graphic novel format. Include a 2 paragraph reflection. Be sure to compare and contrast your chapter with the author's final chapter.
> 3. Select one character from the graphic novel and create a playlist of favorite songs.

Select 8 songs that you think are an appropriate fit given your character's personality and interests. Include a 2 paragraph reflection. Print the lyrics for each song. Be sure to explain why you think the songs that you selected relate to the character from *Pride of Baghdad.*

4. Identify a news article that describes a person who showed courage. Compare the person in the article with one courageous character from the graphic novel. Be sure to summarize the person from the article and the character from the graphic novel. How is the person similar to the character? How is the person different from the character? (Ms. O'Neil-Jones Class Assignment, 2-13-19)

Students had the option of using speech-to-text software or typing their response. Nina wrote:

> A recent news article called "Dog and Giant 70lb Tortoise named Godzilla rescued from hole in So Cal" describes how a dog and a tortoise fell into a hole and were courageous to stay calm while firefighters worked to rescue and free them from the hole.
>
> In a similar manner in the book "Pride of Baghdad" there is a tortoise and lioness who show courage during war in Baghdad staying together and dealing with being on their own.
>
> In both article and book, animals are brought to our attention we learn how they are courageous with what happens to them.
>
> In contrast, in the book "Pride of Baghdad" the animals were dealing with real war around them, in the article which taken place in Southern California there is no war just an accident were courageous is found in both the animals and firefighters. (Nina Class Assignment, 2-14-19)

In her essay, she made comparisons between the fiction text and current event article, pulling text from fiction and nonfiction sources to support her argument. Nina noticed similarities and differences between characters in the graphic novel and animals and individuals who live in California and expressed her own understanding of courage.

Making comparisons across text. Later, during Unit Two, Nina read a short book titled *Sea Prayer* (Hosseini, 2018) about a father who is concerned about his son's safety. Prior to reading the book, the students read a podcast transcript about the author and his motivation for writing the book.

> Q: How do you think the themes discussed in the podcast relate to other text you have read in this class earlier this year?
>
> A: [A]ll 3 books have drama… people are sad. (Nina Class Assignment, 3-4-19)

Nina also noted that "family connection" and "death" was common among the texts and predicted the book "might be sad" (Nina Class Assignment, 3-4-19).

When reading, the students made daily annotations in a reading log. Each day they wrote down information they learned from the text, unknown words, and questions. Nina recorded,

> A: I learned that you need to work hard for your amazing life and opportunities (page 30). (Nina Class Assignment, 3-8-19)

She provided a specific citation that supported her argument and wrote a clear claim about the information she learned. Her initial question included an interest in the outcome of the story ("Will the story end good?") and she subsequently had questions about the theme of indifference ("Why are people so problematic?").

Connecting with an author. After Unit Two, Nina wrote a letter to the author of *Sea Prayer* (Hosseini, 2018). In her letter, she noted examples from the book that were especially profound. Nina wrote,

A: It was really interesting and I liked how the family was together. It was sad that there was a war but interesting how you described it with the pictures. I really liked the words in the book and how they described everything that was going on. (Nina Class Assignment, 4-16-19)

Nina's score for the post-survey was 119/164, indicating a moderate decrease from pre-survey to post-survey and a moderate level of reading motivation and engagement. Nina had a grade of a B in English and her other academic classes (i.e., Algebra and Biology) with the exception of a C in French. When asked about her favorite author, she volunteered information about her favorite quote instead: "If you don't fit in, you are doing something right" (Nina Post-interview, 3-18-19).

Summary. During the interview, Nina spoke about how she appreciated the plot of *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008), emotionally drawn to the story of animals who work together to protect a young animal. She expressed not liking the "drama" of some of the stories and appeared to be impacted by the emotional content of the stories. Her written work suggested that close reading involved writing claims with specific evidence from the world and the text. Her interest in books related to positive stories that showed people coming together for a common cause–an interest that seemed fueled by the intervention curriculum.

Lucia. With an SBAC score of 2324 (indicating a Level 1 achievement range) in eighth grade, Lucia earned 216 on the Accelerated Reading test (indicating a first-grade reading level on a Lexile scale) in October 2018 and 117 (indicating a first-grade reading level on a Lexile scale) in January 2019. She had an A in English in January 2019 before the intervention started. In addition to English, she was enrolled in Biology. Lucia's pre-survey indicated a moderate level of reading engagement and motivation (125/164). One of her favorite books was a graphic novel fantasy series called *Amulet* (Kibuishi, 2008) about a young girl. She identified herself as knowledgeable about food in general. During her free time, she enjoyed going on the computer and reading books from her favorite author, Marc Brown, who wrote the *Arthur* (Brown, 1976) series. Lucia was often quiet during her interactions with me and during class. Ms. O'Neil-Jones would give Lucia the option of writing instead of talking if she preferred that mode of communication. Lucia was friendly towards me, her teacher, and the other students. She often worked one-on-one with Ms. O'Neil-Jones or a paraprofessional who was part of the class. Lucia typically greeted me with a handshake.

Reading nonfiction before a graphic novel. At the beginning of Unit One, Ms. O'Neil-Jones assigned students to complete a KWL-like chart outlining the following questions: what do you **know**, what do you **want** to know, and what did you **learn** before reading about the relationship between Iraq and the United States. Students then read a nonfiction article about an event that inspired the writing of the graphic novel *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008).

Students also completed a graphic organizer, identifying information from the text. Lucia gave specific, but cursory responses to the questions from the assignment,

Q: What happened?
A: Animals were left at the zoo.
Q: Who was there?
A: American and Iraqi soldiers.
Q: Where did it happen?
A: Iraq.
Q: When did it happen?
A: 2003. (Lucia Class Assignment, 1-22-19)

After reading aloud the article during a whole class reading, the students wrote down information they learned from the article. Lucia had a clear response,

A: Animals were left at the zoo without food. (Lucia Class Assignment, 1-22-19)

She also showed interest in continuing with the unit lessons.

After completing the pre-reading activities, students read the graphic novel and took turns during a whole class read aloud each day. Lucia did not read aloud, instead following along with her own book and responding to questions when called by the teacher or occasionally volunteering responses to questions the teacher directed at the whole class.

Using paper, Lucia kept track of the different characters in the book. She noted Noor was the "current girlfriend of Zill, mom of Ali" and included her interpretation of the character ("she is nice pretty good mom to Ali"). In addition to Noor, she kept track of a supporting character named Safa. In response to the following task,

Q: Include evidence from the text that supports your interpretation of the character.

Lucia wrote,

A: He is wise and plans to escape [the zoo]. (Lucia Class Assignment, 1-28-19)

In her responses, she described character traits like perseverance and kindness and explained major events from the story, as in the zoo example.

In addition to the characters, Lucia took notes about her understanding of the text. In response to the question,

Q: What do you think the text is saying?

Lucia wrote,

A: Safa and Noor are out of the zoo and are arguing. (Lucia Class Assignment, 2-7-19)

She also responded to the question,

Q: What in the text makes you think so?

A: Picture of them fighting. (Lucia Class Assignment, 2-7-19)

In her response, she referred the reader to the images that were paired with text in the graphic novel in a brief response.

As Ms. O'Neil-Jones led students through the graphic novel, Lucia continued to track her interpretation of the story.

Q: What do you think the text is saying?

A: Tanks come and lions try to get past them… Bombs blow up a city.

Q: What in the text makes you think so?

A: Picture in story show the tanks. (Lucia Class Assignment, 2-7-19)

As the class approached the end of the novel, Lucia wrote in response to the question,

Q: What do you think the text is saying?

A: They go hunting for horses... Zill falls behind.

Q: What in the text makes you think so?

A: The text says it and the pictures show it. (Lucia Class Assignment, No Date)

As Lucia read, she made notes about unknown words and questions such as,

Q: What is a horizon?

A: I supposed it is something that from home can't be seen. (Lucia Class Assignment, No Date)

Ms. O'Neil-Jones's emphasis on note-taking seemed to impact how Lucia approached her reading.

After reading the graphic novel, Ms. O'Neil-Jones had students view *The Lion King* (Hahn, Allers, & Minkoff, 2013) because it included additional examples of anthropomorphism. Students also considered the role of mood when telling a story. In response to the question,

Q: What is the mood of the opening scene?

Lucia wrote,

A: It was a happy time and very optimistic about the future. (Lucia Class Assignment, 2-28-19)

She considered the relationship between characters in the film as well.

> Q: Why do the animals bow to the newborn prince?
>
> A: Because he will be king.
>
> Q: Why do you think Scar mistreats Simba?
>
> A: I think Scar doesn't like Simba Scar wants to be king. He wants to get rid of Simba. (Lucia Class Assignment, 2-28-19)

In her response, she noted how the characters treated one another and paraphrased content from the film.

On the final assessment for Unit One, she had the option of picking from a menu of prompts. Lucia decided to select one character from the graphic novel and create a playlist of favorite songs.

> Q: Select one character from the graphic novel and create a playlist of favorite songs. Select 8 songs that you think are an appropriate fit given your character's personality and interests. Include a 2 paragraph reflection. Print the lyrics for each song. Be sure to explain why you think the songs that you selected relate to the character from *Pride of Baghdad.* (Ms. O'Neil-Jones Class Assignment, 2-14-19)

After researching songs, she identified the songs "Baby" by Justin Bieber and "The YMCA" by the Village People. In her analysis, Lucia made comparisons between the lyrics and the characters in the graphic novel. She wrote,

> A: This song tells how Ali feels when he is free. This song talks about a place that Ali could live. (Lucia Class Assignment, 2-14-19)

Lucia also included a direct reference to one part of the song ("But now we on our way to greatness and all that ever took was patience") indicating that close reading for her included a grounding in the text.

Responding to images and text. Students then moved onto the next unit. The class book for Unit Two discussed Syria and immigration so Ms. O'Neil-Jones had students read current events about Syria before reading the book. She assigned a transcript of a recent podcast that discussed these issues and featured an interview with the author of the book. Leveraging note-taking lessons that the teacher had introduced earlier in the year, Lucia continued to highlight important information as she read during a pre-reading exercise. She reviewed her highlighted notes and responded to the following.

> Q: How do you think the child's experience in Homs is different from the father's experience in the city?
>
> A: The child's experience was of a war torn city and the father remembers the beautiful city the way it was before the war. (Lucia Class Assignment, 3-4-19)

Lucia's prediction referenced information from the pre-reading text.

Students had an emotional response to the class discussions about recent events concerning refugees. In response to the question,

> Q: How do you think the themes discussed in the podcast relate to the other text you have read in this class earlier this year?

Lucia wrote,

> A: The theme of looking for a better life is shown in both the podcast and the book the *Pride of Baghdad.* (Lucia Class Assignment, 3-4-19)

So, in her response, Lucia summarized multiple class texts. As Lucia read *Sea Prayer* (Hosseini, 2018), she kept track of information she learned from each reading. After reading the first few pages, she responded.

> Q: What is one piece of Information that you learned from the book? Be sure to consider both the images and the text.

A: They slept on a roof in the summer. (Lucia Class Assignment, 3-5-19)

Next, she responded to another prompt.

Q: Identify 1 confusing word or phrase in the text.

A: Strings of olive trees in the breeze. (Lucia Class Assignment, 3-5-19)

Lucia had a difficult time with the descriptive language. When responding to,

Q: Write down 1 question that you have about the text. Be sure to consider both the images and the text.

She wrote a declarative statement instead of writing a question.

A: Showing you a herd of cows grazing in a field. (Lucia Class Assignment, 3-5-19)

Lucia's response indicated that she may not have understood the task.

Her responses continued to include her ideas about what the text was saying (Lucia Class Assignment, 3-7-19). In response to the question,

Q: What is one piece of information that you learned from the book? Be sure to consider both the images and the text.

Initially she wrote how she learned about war and supported her statement with,

A: The pictures show the protests. (Lucia Class Assignment, 3-7-19)

As she read, Lucia noted phrases from the book that were challenging such as siege, exposed, and calligraphy (Lucia Class Assignment, 3-8-19). When noting what she learned from the text, at times she included information from class discussions of related material. For example, the class discussed how people in the United States are homeless (Observation, 3-11-19). At the end of the unit, she wrote about the characters and the nuances in their relationship as information she learned from the day's reading.

A: Father is scared for the trip for him and his son. (Lucia Class Assignment, 3-11-19)

Overall, Lucia had a clear understanding of the characters and noted areas of the text that were confusing or prompted re-reading.

After the intervention. After Unit Two, Lucia wrote a letter to the author as a post-reading activity. In her letter, she wrote,

A: I like the pictures in the book. I really like the story and how the photos help tell the story. (Lucia Class Assignment, 4-16-19)

Her interest in the book stemmed from the plot and the coupling of text and images. In her post-survey and post-interview, Lucia continued to share about her passion for YouTube, food (pepperoni pizza especially), and the YMCA. Lucia's interest in authors expanded from the pre-survey to include the author of *Sea Prayer* (2018), Khaled Hosseini. On her post-survey, she had a slight increase (125/164 to 130/164) indicating a moderate level of reading motivation and engagement. Lucia's grade in English at the end of March was a C.

Summary. Lucia had a difficult time completing her work independently, but benefited from the scaffolding and one-on-one support provided by Ms. O'Neil-Jones. She grounded her opinions about the text with specific examples that she paraphrased or references to page numbers. When provided with the opportunity to bring in her own texts, she chose to incorporate song lyrics and made connections between the characters from the graphic novel with the emotions expressed in the songs. During Unit Two, she elaborated upon her interest in the images that an author used when depicting inhumane conditions experienced by a father and son in their search for a safe home.

Research Questions

With these elaborate descriptions of the experiences of the students and teachers in hand, in this section, I address each of the two research questions in turn, relying on the evidence revealed in the interviews, observations, and artifacts from the participants.

Research Question One

As a reminder, the full text of the first research question was,

How do special education educators work with students who have IEPs to support the ongoing comprehension of complex disciplinary text? What factors do teachers take into consideration when designing instruction? What is the relationship of instruction to changes over time in students' success and engagement when reading complex text?

In both classrooms, the teachers largely asked open-ended, in contrast to known-answer (Nystrand, 1996) questions. Turning first to Ms. Romano, she championed questions that did not have a predetermined answer (77% of her questions were open-ended). Although she wanted students to reference the text in their responses, she also wanted students to develop their own claims about themes such as love and genocide–bringing in text as evidentiary support for the claims. For example, the prompt "write your response to the text" when reading *Night* (Wiesel, 2006) allowed students to share questions about the reading and make personal connections to the text. Essay writing, in general, also had a central role in Ms. Romano's classroom. Students wrote essays periodically and were encouraged to select their own topics from a selection of open prompts. Ms. Romano used one-on-one conferences and the "Google Docs" platform to share feedback. Her goal was to offer specific feedback to students and create a writing community of "colleagues" in her classroom (Observation, 1-25-19).

Ms. Romano posed questions to her students that were rooted in the tradition of New Criticism (Catterson & Pearson, 2017). The questions that Ms. Romano expected students to answer required references to the text.

Q:

1. Select one topic from the list below.
2. Skim and scan the handouts/notes in your binder and the memoir.
3. Write a 4-paragraph essay in response to the topic that you selected.
4. Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your argument.

Topic 1

Wiesel argues that he "changed" on page 39. How do you think Wiesel changed?

Why do you think he changed?

Topic 2

In the next to the last sentence in the book, Wiesel says that when he looked in a mirror after liberation, he saw a corpse contemplating him. He ends the book by stating, "The look in his eyes as he gazed at me has never left me." What do you think he means by that statement?

Topic 3

What do you think is the role of hope and optimism during horrendous times?

Is optimism always a positive influence?

Topic 4

What do you think is Eliezer's relationship with his faith? (Ms. Romano Class Assignment, 3-4-19)

Overall, student performance on the close reading tasks during the intervention did not improve for Elizabeth because she had a difficult time completing class assignments. Her grades did not improve over time as well. By contrast, Luke and Steven displayed improvement and demonstrated greater engagement with the reading tasks after the intervention than before the intervention. Survey scores for Luke and Steven reflected this improvement. Elizabeth, though, had difficulty maintaining reading motivation and engagement throughout the intervention. Her pre-survey score was 130/164, but her post-survey score was 127/164.

Turning next to Ms. O'Neil-Jones, 84% of the questions she posed were open-ended and encouraged a range of student interpretations of the readings. Ms. O'Neil-Jones's questions were also consistent with prompts found in the New Criticism tradition in that they asked for students to use evidence from the text. A consistent generic probe in Ms. O'Neil-Jones's classroom was the classic close reading ploy, "What is the text saying?," followed closely by, "What in the text makes you think so?" This pair recurred frequently across her lessons. It was present during the reading of *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008) in Unit One. Students were required to explain the text and how they came to their conclusions.

Ms. O'Neil-Jones's students also tracked characters using a graphic organizer. The teacher's directions asked students to complete the following,

> Q: For each character, list the act of courage and explain why the act is courageous. Find and list a quote from the story to support each character to show why that character is courageous. (Ms. O'Neil-Jones Class Assignment, 1-22-19)

Finally, students had to reference text in their *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008) projects at the end of Unit One as well.

Performance did not improve over time for Lucia. However, Nina did display improvement. Notably, even though Lucia's performance did not improve over time, her level of reading motivation and engagement did. Lucia scored 125/164 on her pre-survey and 130/164 on her post-survey. Nina's motivation and engagement score did not improve (121/164 at pre-test and 119/164 at post-test).

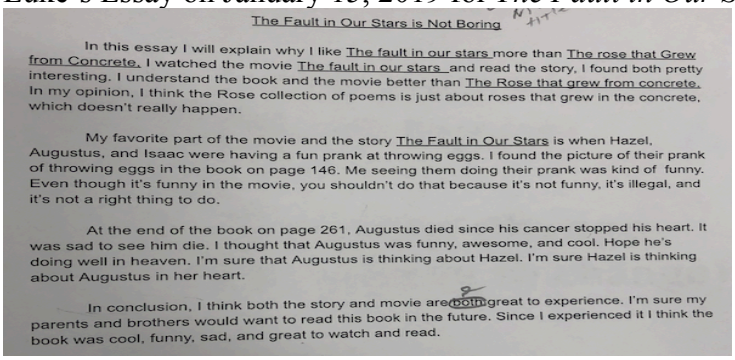
Research Question Two

How do students within a special education context view themselves as learners? Do those views change when a teacher engages them in close reading practices? What aspects of the classroom context influence whether or not students adopt these new practices and/or develop a more positive academic identity? To what degree do any of the practices they are learning in their English Special Day classes transfer to their other discipline-specific classes, such as science or history—especially when they are accountable for understanding complex text?

In both classrooms, some of the students were positively influenced by the reading tasks their teachers asked them to complete during the intervention units. In Ms. Romano's classroom, at the end of the intervention, some students had a "*developed* academic identity" and others had a "*developing* academic identity." For example, Steven and Luke (but not Elizabeth) showed evidence of a "developed academic identity" at the end of the intervention. Luke consistently expressed his desire to perform well in school and earn high grades. Even though his NAEP reading assessment did not indicate growth, his written work improved over time. Figures 2, 3, and 4 below illustrate improvement from his written work in January compared to February.

Figure 2

Luke's Essay on January 15, 2019 for *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014)



The Fault in Our Stars is Not Boring

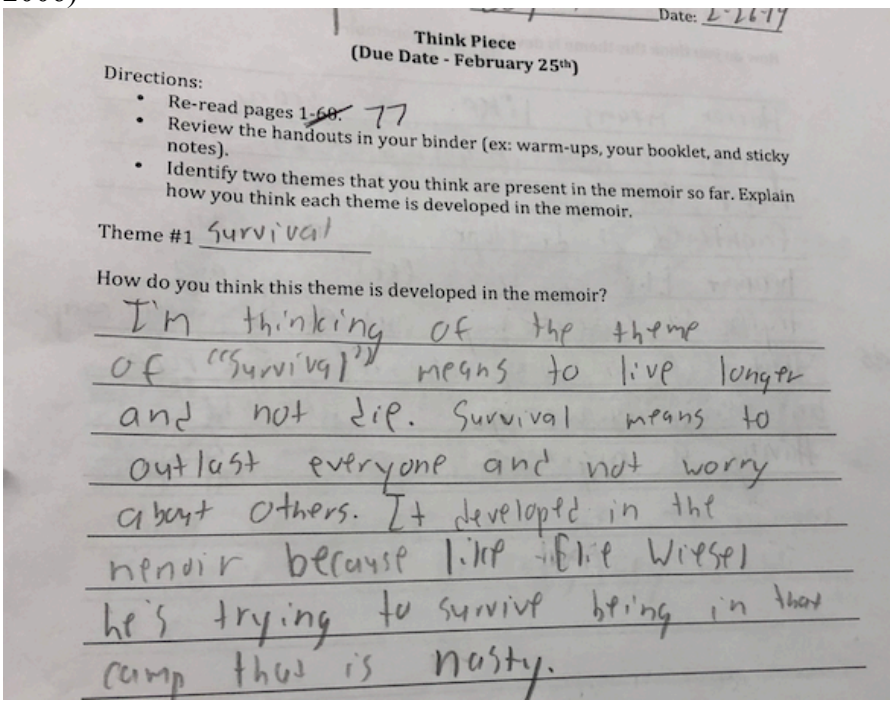
In this essay I will explain why I like The fault in our stars more than The rose that Grew from Concrete. I watched the movie The fault in our stars and read the story, I found both pretty interesting. I understand the book and the movie better than The Rose that grew from concrete. In my opinion, I think the Rose collection of poems is just about roses that grew in the concrete, which doesn't really happen.

My favorite part of the movie and the story The Fault in Our Stars is when Hazel, Augustus, and Isaac were having a fun prank at throwing eggs. I found the picture of their prank of throwing eggs in the book on page 146. Me seeing them doing their prank was kind of funny. Even though it's funny in the movie, you shouldn't do that because it's not funny, it's illegal, and it's not a right thing to do.

At the end of the book on page 261, Augustus died since his cancer stopped his heart. It was sad to see him die. I thought that Augustus was funny, awesome, and cool. Hope he's doing well in heaven. I'm sure that Augustus is thinking about Hazel. I'm sure Hazel is thinking about Augustus in her heart.

In conclusion, I think both the story and movie are both great to experience. I'm sure my parents and brothers would want to read this book in the future. Since I experienced it I think the book was cool, funny, sad, and great to watch and read.

Figure 3
Part One of Luke's "Think Piece" assignment on February 26, 2019 in Response to *Night* (Wiesel, 2006)



Date: 2-26-19

Think Piece
(Due Date - February 25th)

Directions:

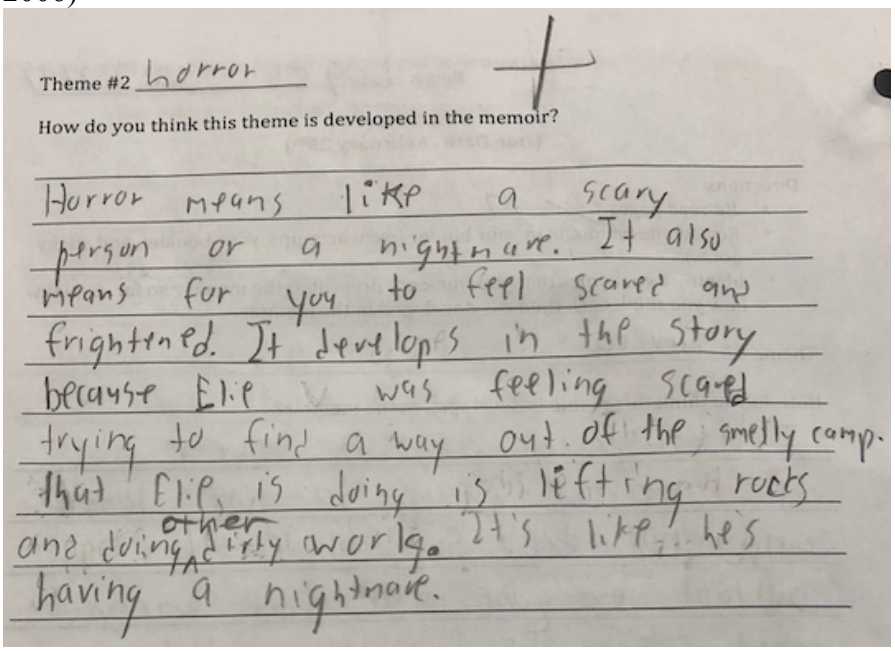
- Re-read pages 1-~~60~~ 77
- Review the handouts in your binder (ex: warm-ups, your booklet, and sticky notes).
- Identify two themes that you think are present in the memoir so far. Explain how you think each theme is developed in the memoir.

Theme #1 Survival

How do you think this theme is developed in the memoir?

I'm thinking of the theme of "Survival" means to live longer and not die. Survival means to outlast everyone and not worry about others. It developed in the memoir because like Elie Wiesel he's trying to survive being in that camp that is nasty.

Figure 4
Part Two of Luke's "Think Piece" assignment on February 26, 2019 in Response to *Night* (Wiesel, 2006)



Theme #2 horror

How do you think this theme is developed in the memoir?

Horror means like a scary person or a nightmare. It also means for you to feel scared and frightened. It develops in the story because Elie was feeling scared trying to find a way out of the smelly camp. that Elie is doing is lifting rocks and doing ~~other~~ dirty work. It's like he's having a nightmare.

Luke described a specific strategy during his post-interview that indicated he was committed to reading complex text. During the interview, he also referenced how "there is no right answer" to the reading assessment, which indicated he was asking the right questions, from a constructivist perspective, about the nature of reading. For his part, Steven worked regularly with Mrs. Johnson and remained focused in class. He did not hesitate when asked to present or share his work with his

classmates. His post-survey indicated that his appreciation for books expanded over time; on the pre-survey, he wrote "I don't have favorite books" when asked to name his favorite books (Steven Pre-survey, 10-27-19). During the post-test, however, Steven identified *Phineas L. MacGuire* (O'Roark Dowell, 2007) as his favorite book series (Steven Post-survey, 3-8-19). He often did not participate spontaneously, which reflected that he still had room to grow in terms of self-efficacy. Elizabeth unfortunately did not participate actively, if at all, in the class even when required, which in itself illustrated that she needed additional support. Although Elizabeth was an avid reader outside of class, she showed room for growth in school, especially when it came to understanding the purpose behind assignments.

In Ms. O'Neil-Jones's class, Nina maintained a "developed academic identity" over time. Lucia exhibited growth, beginning with a "developing academic identity" at the beginning of the study and showing evidence of a "developed academic identity" at the end of the study. For example, from the beginning to the end of the project, Nina was confident in class, comfortable reading aloud, and receptive to feedback about her ability to read fluently and with expression. She also seemed at ease when sharing questions about the class content in front of her peers. Nina's participation and voice in class solidified over time. Specifically, when reading *Sea Prayer* (Hosseini, 2018). Nina made intentional and explicit connections between the text and current events, when she wrote a paper at the end of Unit 1 comparing *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008) with a recent news article.

> A recent news article called "Dog and Giant 70lb Tortoise named Godzilla rescued from hole in So Cal" describes how a dog and a tortoise fell into a hole and were courageous to stay calm while firefighters worked to rescue and free them from the hole.
>
> In a similar manner in the book "Pride of Baghdad" there is a tortoise and lioness who show courage during war in Baghdad staying together and dealing with being on their own.
>
> In both article and book, animals are brought to our attention we learn how they are courageous with what happens to them. (Nina Class Assignment, 2-14-19)

Lucia's post-interview indicated she was interested in the class book, *Sea Prayer* (Hosseini, 2018); however, she did not regularly participate in class discussions. She never volunteered, but would respond if called upon. Lucia's interview also indicated that she saw herself as a reader more at the end of the intervention than in the beginning.

Academic Identities and the Intervention

At both Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School, students' literacy practices in English fueled academic identities in other classes. At Playa Vista High School, Luke and Elizabeth were encouraged to ask their own questions in history class. For example, Luke wrote multiple essays throughout the year in response to his own questions about history. In Luke's essays, he was required to identify at least five sources that could be used to answer his questions. In one such essay in January 2019, he wrote about the Mayflower and how the ship was used to travel to the United States; in doing so, Luke compared sailing with other modes of transportation.

Students worked individually on a typical day in history. They read excerpts from the chapter and then completed questions in response to the chapter. Students moved at their own pace, so the class was differentiated and responsive to students' varying performance levels and interests. Students were also encouraged to write their own claims, such as an argument in response to the following question during their exam in January 2019,

> Q: Write a letter to Thomas Jefferson and all of the other members of the Second Continental Congress. Explain why you think the Slave Clause should be removed, or not removed.

Overall, the focal students in Ms. Romano's class displayed enthusiasm about using literacy to pursue interests outside of school and referenced books in their everyday lives to build knowledge and experience enjoyment.

Students did describe varying reactions to reading. For example, Luke expressed interest in the class book, *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014)–drawn to the film version of the book and humorous scenes in the novel (Luke Post-interview, 3-21-19). For Steven, though, individuals who experienced hardship such as Isaac in *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014) ("he had eye cancer and became blind") and Tupac Shakur ("he died at age 25 in Las Vegas") made an impression on him (Steven Post-interview, 3-8-19).

Reading for Nina meant learning and sharing information. As an illustrative example, in Biology class, reading for Nina meant considering her own reasons for learning science and paying close attention to the text (as in word problems). Nina read aloud in her Biology class frequently. The teacher had students act out excerpts from the text at times (when learning about homeostasis and breathing patterns) and compare their experiences with key unit concepts. Nina encountered new vocabulary in her readings, in addition to symbols (such as the chemical notations for oxygen and carbon dioxide).

All in all, students in both classrooms largely displayed positive academic identities at the end of the study. Luke and Steven in Ms. Romano's class and Lucia in Ms. O'Neil-Jones's class showed growth in their academic identities during the intervention. This was seen in their increased scores on their surveys and their responses to interview questions and class assignments.

Summary

I gained insight into my research questions from my analysis of the teachers' instruction, student responses to the curriculum, and literacy practices of the students. For example, I noted similarities between the two teachers as they implemented our collaboratively planned lessons. Both teachers asked predominantly open-ended questions that required students to include textual evidence in their answers and did not have fixed answers. Both teachers also implemented strategies such as building on students' background knowledge, differentiating instruction, and using evidence-based writing activities that, in particular instances, fostered student reading comprehension and reading engagement. Four of the five students improved on their written assignments and expressed greater reading motivation and engagement over the course of the study after participating socially in the learning activities. All five students included textual evidence when arguing their own claims and described complex interactions with text outside of school, but only some students read the complex disciplinary text in their English class with ease. Across the two classrooms, three students' academic identities improved during the study. In these examples, student development was tied to instruction. My analysis revealed strong evidence of a positive effect of open-ended tasks that asked students to leverage both the text and their own knowledge when building arguments. All in all, close reading for the students in the context of the interventions involved personal responses and explicit references to the text, which for some correlated with growth in their academic identity.

CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Overview of the Study

The CCSS have led to different foci in literacy classrooms across the country, including an increased emphasis on the close reading of complex text. For example, the CCSS's first anchor standard argues students need to be able to "read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it" (CCSSO & NGA, 2010, p. 10). The RPC for the CCSS in English Language Arts and Literacy, Grades 3–12 (Coleman & Pimentel, 2012) state that close reading and "gathering knowledge from specific texts" must be the main focus of classroom activities, instead of being "consigned to the margins" (p. 9; cited by Hinchman & Moore, 2013). Accordingly, teachers need additional support with teaching students how to handle complex text, and teachers who work with students with IEPs have even more demands to meet (Applebee, 2013; Beers, 2013; Catterson & Pearson, 2017; Compton-Lilly, 2013). Close reading requires students learn what a text says, means, and does (Pearson, 2014); however, recommendations for close reading from the authors of the standards could potentially limit the type of reading that adolescents complete by encouraging deference to the text and reading that minimizes the role of readers' background knowledge, culture, and sociocultural contexts in which texts are written. The version of close reading that is put forth in the CCSS is similar to a theory of reading that was common during the New Criticism literary movement in the early to mid-20th century (Catterson & Pearson, 2017). Without additional guidance, students may not be able to access important literacies they need to be successful inside and outside of school (Hinchman & Moore, 2013; Catterson & Pearson, 2017).

In this dissertation study I sought to alter this dynamic by investigating the efficacy of close reading interventions. I studied the impact of two close reading interventions, one each in a 9th-grade and an 11th- and 12th-mixed-grade classroom. Using mixed-methods and a formative experiment paradigm, I used teacher surveys, teacher interviews, student interviews, student surveys, student work, reading assessments, classroom observations, and teacher planning sessions to explore how readers in two classrooms made sense of text and the strategies that supported their comprehension and engagement during two curricular units that involved close reading of disciplinary texts. The units were used by students in Ms. Romano and Ms. O'Neil-Jones's classrooms (two Special Day English teachers) at two different school sites and were co-designed by each teacher and myself.

Summary of Findings

Findings suggest that both teachers implemented routines that reflected some of these emphases found in recent standards. For example, they both asked open-ended questions to their students during the intervention. Additionally, strategies such as building on students' background knowledge, differentiating instruction, and using evidence-based writing activities were found, in particular instances, to support student reading comprehension and reading engagement. Student uptake was modest but steady; three of the five students in the study made progress on their written assignments and reported being more engaged as the close reading intervention unfolded. Overall, close reading for the five students included a combination of personal responses and direct references to the text. Three students showed evidence of a more developed academic identity at the end of the study–a change plausibly (at least in part) attributable to the intervention.

As part of this study, I found that students appear to benefit from, or at least respond to, open-ended questions that allow them to use both their background knowledge and information from the text when responding to a range of tasks, which were predominantly questions from their teachers. For example, Ms. Romano presented open-ended questions to her students about the class text *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014) and *Night* (Wiesel, 2006) and during short writing assessments, projects, and essay assignments, which the students responded to in turn. One prompt during Unit

One asked students to select a text that appealed to them and argue why an incoming student would enjoy the same book. In their responses, students reflected on their reading interests and imagined the perspective of an incoming student and how they would relate to a particular book. Later in the year, Ms. Romano continued to present open-ended questions when she asked students to write a "Think Piece" after reading just over half of the memoir *Night* (Wiesel, 2006). Students were asked to skim the book, identify two themes that they thought were present in the memoir, and explain these themes.

Additionally, Ms. Romano often asked students to respond to *Night* (Wiesel, 2006) at the beginning of class. This was a chance for students to write their own questions and describe connections to the text. Similarly, Ms. O'Neil-Jones had students respond to open-ended questions after reading the graphic novel *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008) as a whole class text. For example, students considered the following questions after reading: What do you think the text is saying? What is the text makes you think so? Students were able to write their own claims about the graphic novel and then support their ideas with specific evidence. Students also had an opportunity to pick a final writing assignment. After provided with a menu of options for an essay assignment, Nina chose to compare a current event article with the book.

In addition to presenting open-ended prompts to students, teachers built on students' background knowledge when providing reading comprehension instruction. For example, when speaking with students about the themes that were present in the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* (Green, 2014), Ms. Romano connected the class text to another class text that students read earlier in the year (Tupac Shakur's book of poems) as they both discussed themes of love and relationships. Ms. Romano also scaffolded discussions by providing background information and building on student ideas. She remarked in her pre-interview,

> I think it's important to affirm student understanding and to make them [students] feel like they have something important to say so that they'll say more things in the future and hopefully their observations will become stronger and stronger. (Ms. Romano Pre-interview, 12-14-18)

By leveraging what students already knew, Ms. Romano highlighted students' strengths and created an environment for her students to connect what they knew about the world with new information.

Ms. O'Neil-Jones similarly used students' background knowledge as a jumping-off point for talking about class texts. She also made connections between the setting of Syria and the Bay Area, given that both cities shared similar geographic features. Through these analogies, she aimed to model finding commonalities between locations.

Both teachers differentiated their instruction as well. This occurred through different expectations, assessments, and pacing protocols (by encouraging some students to go on and other students to redo the assignment, perhaps with additional feedback or scaffolding about a new focus). For example, Ms. Romano allowed students to finish the opening writing activity at different times. If some students needed additional time, she allowed them to continue working. The students who finished were able to move onto a different activity. Lessons that provided options such as opportunities for students to practice various skills or complete tasks through different mediums have been shown to foster student learning (Tomlinson, 2014). In their work with elementary school students, other researchers found that effective reading comprehension instruction includes differentiation (in addition to components, such as attention to world and disciplinary knowledge, inclusion of a variety of text, motivational environments and texts for reading, comprehension strategy instruction, text structure instruction, discussion, vocabulary and language knowledge, reading combined with writing, observations, and assessments) (Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011).

Moreover, teachers used evidence-based writing activities in order to support students' reading comprehension. This happened with both small tasks (answering a question) and large tasks (writing an essay). For example, Ms. Romano's directions would explicitly state the need to refer to the text in making one's argument or explanation. Ms. Romano asked students to complete a daily writing activity that required students to refer to the text when composing their responses. When responding, they were able to sift through earlier handouts and notes, as well as the book, in order to draft their answers. Ms. O'Neil-Jones, similarly, required that students use evidence from class texts when writing their final unit essays.

All in all, Luke, Steven, and Elizabeth responded to the modeling that Ms. Romano provided during class. After Ms. Romano noticed that students were not taking notes independently, she assigned a note-taking booklet for students to complete. Ms. Romano also modeled how to respond to the plot during a lesson when the main character avoided death and was reunited with his father because students were initially quiet. Ms. Romano asked students to imagine how the character felt at that point in time ("Can you imagine living like this from moment to moment day to day?" (Observation, 1-25-19)) and shared her personal reaction to the scene in the memoir. For her part, Nina reacted positively to the supports that Ms. O'Neil-Jones provided as well.

Some students showed evidence of a more developed academic identity at the end of the study as a result of the intervention. At the beginning of the study Luke expressed frustration when talking about reading during the assessments for the study and during class when completing assignments. At the end of the study, when completing the post-assessment, he presented a new perspective about reading comprehension that acknowledged its situated and tentative character. Steven's developed academic identity was seen in his written work. His final essay for Unit Two included a combination of images and text and exceeded the average page length typical of students in the class.

Limitations

The main limitations of the study relate to the participants, the assessments, and data collection methods. One of the main limitations of this study is the small sample size for students and teachers. Five students, two teachers, and one paraprofessional participated in the study. The small sample size makes it difficult to generalize findings from the study. Additional time for recruitment could have made it easier for me to find interested participants. I was not able to start my study until the middle of the school year and this could have contributed to the small sample size. Also, the requirement at Playa Vista High School that students complete their assessments, interviews, and surveys during lunch may have been a deterrent. Some students expressed interest in joining the study, but had extracurricular activities that conflicted.

Additionally, school policy did not allow me, particularly in Clinton High School, to use tests (i.e., the NAEP) that were not part of their normal assessment portfolio. Thus, I could not conduct individual cognitive testing of students that might have yielded additional information about students' skill levels. Surveys to the parents and guardians may have yielded more information about how students approach reading and writing tasks outside of school (Heath, 1983). Home cultural and language factors may have influenced how they approached reading and writing outside of school. For example, Luke and Steven both spoke other languages and additional information about their language background would have been helpful.

Moreover, I was not able to meet with one 11th-grade student, Elizabeth, for her final reading post-assessment and interview, and that limited my analysis of changes over time in reading performance for the students in the study. Additionally, I opted for audio recording of the classroom observations, partly to increase the likelihood of greater student participation (on the grounds that video permissions are harder to obtain from students and parents). Video recording instead of audio recording would have allowed for more nuanced and robust analysis of the materials in the classroom

space. Overall, limitations related to the sample size, recruitment process, assessments, and data collection methods need to be taken into consideration when weighing the significance of the findings.

Implications

Findings from this work could be influential in the creation of effective literacy supports for vulnerable readers and have implications for pedagogy and curriculum. The findings support the use of open-ended questioning to facilitate comprehension. Strategies such as utilizing background knowledge, differentiating instruction, and using evidence-based writing were also useful developing students' ability to closely read and understand complex text. During the intervention, students responded positively to scaffolding, and the majority of students improved in their written work and engagement in the classroom. Teachers, therefore, should assign prompts that ask authentic questions and allow for open-ended responses from students and assign students to read complex text that fosters students' ability to think.

Implications for Pedagogy

A number of implications for pedagogy can be gleaned from the study. Strategies for evidence-based writing could be effective for supporting students' reading comprehension, even for students, like those in this study, who were classified as having a learning disability. Writing that requires students to include specific evidence from the text inherently asks students to consider how to support their claims with warrants and evidence (Harris, 2017). Both Ms. Romano and Ms. O'Neil-Jones used evidence-based writing during the intervention. During the "warm-ups" in the beginning of class, students looked back through their notes about the class book to pull evidence for their responses to questions that Ms. Romano presented to the class. In Ms. O'Neil-Jones's class, students responded to the classic close reading prompts by writing their own claims after reading and then supporting their claims with evidence from the text. An emphasis on writing when reading closely also brings attention to the connection between reading and writing (Frankel, Becker, Rowe, & Pearson, 2016).

Findings suggest that engagement strategies such as allowing for student choice when selecting class texts could be effective (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008; Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012). Student choice of text has been found to increase student agency and builds on student interest in text (Appleton, Christenson, & Furlong, 2008). Ms. Romano started the year with having students vote on the books that they wanted to read. In Ms. O'Neil-Jones's class, students did not have the opportunities to select texts (although they had choice when selecting end of the unit projects). As a result of providing choice to students, Ms. O'Neil-Jones reported that students comprehended their reading better and engaged in more active reading.

Finally, the findings imply that teacher modeling is a necessary component of effective instruction. Ms. Romano routinely wrote sample responses to "warm-up" questions using a document camera and thought aloud possible responses to the questions that she asked students to complete. Similarly, Ms. O'Neil-Jones thought aloud about the possible meanings of the class text after students read aloud. Modeling, such as reading aloud for students, including sample responses, and thinking aloud, was vital for student growth in a study with adolescents that looked at the effects of reciprocal teaching on reading comprehension (Okkinga, van Steensel, van Gelderen, & Sleegers, 2018). Researchers found that students were more likely to adopt the reciprocal teaching practices and make gains in their reading performance after teachers modeled the expected behaviors and thought processes. In a related study, explicit instruction was also found to be an effective avenue for teaching reading strategies (Magnusson, Roe, & Blikstad Balas, 2019). Accordingly, the evidence for claims about the efficacy of using modeling is strong enough to suggest possible alterations in the instruction

and curriculum we offer students in our schools. My data demonstrated how teacher modeling (versus just talking etc.) contributed to student's improved comprehension and engagement with text.

Additionally, findings suggest that making explicit connections to students' background knowledge is a necessary component of effective instruction. One of the most developed models of comprehension is Kintsch's (1988, 1998) Construction–Integration (CI) model. Building on earlier models such as schema theory, the CI model argues that knowledge spurs the comprehension process and our knowledge forms how we comprehend. Within Kintsch's model for reading comprehension, background knowledge is essential for forming a situation model. Note that this is antithetical to classic close reading protocols. Both Ms. Romano and Ms. O'Neil-Jones made explicit connections to students' background knowledge. For example, Ms. Romano built upon her students' understanding of the Holocaust and World War II when reading *Night* (Wiesel, 2006) and Ms. O'Neil-Jones leveraged students' understanding of the Bay Area when reading *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008). Why do teachers engage students' background knowledge even when new guidelines (e.g., CCSS spinoffs) suggest that understanding is enhanced by minimizing reliance on knowledge? Teachers have a desire to appeal to students' interests, increase engagement, and make the unfamiliar familiar. Even so, students can make text connections and privilege text evidence. So it is not an either/or situation. It is possible to privilege both prior knowledge as a jumping off point, and text-dependent reasoning to come up with answers to questions. This extends even to questions that require interpretation (weaving together text evidence and prior knowledge), analysis (how does the author try to convince us of her point of view), or critique (is the author's argument about the roots of slavery in the South valid?).

Both teachers viewed learning and reading as inherently social activities and thus described their instructional models as including fluid transitions where students and teachers took turns taking responsibility for a particular task during a class period, unit, and school year. Findings suggest that a teacher's instruction should support students as they grow into experienced learners while attempting tasks with which they are not yet experts because students benefit from explicit instruction when learning how to comprehend complex text (Duke & Pearson, 2002; Duke, Pearson, Strachan, & Billman, 2011). Scaffolding and feedback are truly important tools for all students and this is especially so for those with IEPs. Research about the GRR model suggests that over time teachers shift responsibility for completing a task to students (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Students are mentored so they move from being novices to experts when performing a particular task (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). Teachers include lessons, guided work, and independent work. When Ms. Romano modeled how to take notes about *Night* (Wiesel, 2006), she expected her students to take notes independently after seeing her model and practicing as a group. For her part, Ms. O'Neil-Jones expected students to read more complex text after initially reading less complex text. After reading aloud and modeling her thinking about the text, Ms. O'Neil-Jones then expected students to be able to read with more independence. Reading and learning in both classrooms were constructive processes and aimed to move students towards being able to read complex text and respond independently.

Implications for Curriculum

For curriculum, the outcome of the study implies that the use of images could be effective when supporting students' reading comprehension. Specifically, Ms. Romano included videos to supplement her instruction about class texts. She had students view video clips in order to visualize the setting of the class books (for example, fiction clips to see the movie version of the class novel and nonfiction clips to visualize the scenes from the memoir). Ms. O'Neil-Jones selected *Pride of Baghdad* (Vaughan & Henrichon, 2008) as a class text for her students and combined the close reading of text with the close reading of images. By including text and image, both teachers fostered a mix of skills.

Findings suggest that the use of open-ended questions is effective when supporting students' reading comprehension (Nystrand, 1996). Asking students questions that permit more than one correct answer can also promote close reading (e.g., to decide which of two or more responses is better supported by the text, thereby rendering the text relevant). In fact, when students perform inferential and even critical tasks, they need to refer to the text more than ever to find evidence that warrants the answers they concoct.

All in all, findings suggest that reading includes the reader, text, and activity (within a particular sociocultural context or "environmental backdrop" (i.e., the RAND model) (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). Ms. Romano included student activities that addressed student interests, the nature of the text, and the overall context in which the students were reading and responding. Ms. Romano wanted students to move beyond retelling and include original ideas. She remarked one day during her pre-interview that a student,

> [I]s focusing on true love between Augustus and Hazel and he's basically retelling the story… So okay I understand that he understands the story, but where are his ideas? (Ms. Romano Pre-interview, 12-14-19)

Ms. O'Neil-Jones had a comprehensive approach as well that took into account not only students' current performance level when reading and fluency abilities, but also in-school and out-of-school factors. During lessons, she emphasized the need for students to "source" a text and consider the author and time period when it was written; she also wanted students to be able to make connections between history and the events in the book *Fences* (Wilson, 1986).

Suggestions for Future Research

As discussed earlier, this study had several limitations, such as a relatively small sample size and short observation period. In order to improve the ability to generalize findings, research studies in the future could increase the number of participants and lengthen the study time. By following teachers and students for a longer period of time, more information could be gleaned about the extent to which students internalize and use strategies that are emphasized in the CCSS when completing other reading (potentially both inside and outside of the classroom environment). By adjusting the number of participants and length of study, future studies would be more equipped to understanding how teachers support students who have IEPs with the close reading of complex text.

The study included one paraprofessional, but would have benefitted from her inclusion in the planning process as well. Interviews with administrators and other content area teachers would have provided information about how the students perform in their other classes and their history with special education.

Future studies could include the use of video recording (Data Research and Development Center, 2007). The video recording of classroom lessons might allow for more robust analysis of student performance and each teacher's instruction. Additional observations in disciplinary classes would provide insight into the close reading practices used by students when learning other content (Pearson, Moje, & Greenleaf, 2010). By conducting additional observations, future studies could test for spontaneous or intentional transfer.

It would also be fascinating to consider engagement strategies. Choice was really important in Ms. Romano's class because she thought it was on the direct pathway to engagement. Additionally, choice when reading is something students will need to learn to do on their own as adults. Choice was not an option in Ms. O'Neil-Jones's classroom when selecting class texts. Would choice have changed the equation for ninth-grade or even younger students? Possibly so. As a result, by selecting text for ninth-grade students, future studies could gain insight about choice with younger students.

There were also issues related to text length and students' difficulties in actually performing assigned tasks. The average text length was longer in the 11th- and 12th-grade class in comparison to

the 9th-grade class. Future studies could thus look at what impact, if any, length of text has on students' engagement and comprehension of text. Additionally, one student had a difficult time with writing. Future studies could look at the impact of speech-to-text software when answering questions about the text (Gardner, 1983; Rose & Meyer, 2002). A study with first-grade students found that speech recognition software was helpful for developing emerging reading comprehension (Baker, 2017). Here, one student in Ms. Romano's class had a challenge writing on her own, so future studies should look at the impact of speech-to-text software when students craft responses to reading.

Additionally, given that my findings suggest a social view of learning, my work necessitates a rethinking of concepts that do not consider the interaction between the text, task, and individual. In other words, students can be positioned as able or "disabled" readers depending on which aspect of the learning environment is altered. If my findings are valid, it might imply that students deemed to have a learning barrier or challenge may not experience the difficulty in all contexts.

Conclusion

This study attempted to contribute to the literature about how teachers adjust their instruction to support vulnerable readers while meeting demands of complex text. By placing attention on students' background knowledge, teachers engaged students using open-ended questions. In response, students expressed interest in the active learning opportunities, challenging material, and opportunities to learn about and question the human condition, how to dialogue with text, and how authors' decisions influence meaning. This study therefore indicated that close reading cannot–and should not–be detached from the contexts in which the texts are written and contexts in which the students are reading this text.

Both Ms. Romano and Ms. O'Neil-Jones provided students with open-ended questions when reading class texts. In Ms. Romano's class, students wrote responses to fiction and nonfiction texts and developed assertions about love and illness, genocide, and adversity. Ms. O'Neil-Jones similarly provided her students with opportunities to interrogate text and consider themes of community and family. Through the use of authentic questions that did not have a pre-determined response, students were encouraged to make arguments and use both personal knowledge and knowledge gleaned from nonfiction and fiction text to support their claims. By doing so, students, at least in part, demonstrated a more developed academic identity.

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Appendix A: Sequence of Data Collection

Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present side-by-side timelines for the collection of data at Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School.

Table 3 presents a side-by-side timeline for the collection of data from the end of October 2018 through the end of January 2019 at Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School for the interviews with students and teachers, and classroom observations. X indicates an instance of a data collection activity for the particular type of source identified in the column.

Table 3: Sequence of Data Collection at Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School October 22, 2018 through January 21, 2019

Playa Vista High School				**Clinton High School**		
Unit	**Observation**	**Interview**	**Week of**	**Unit**	**Observation**	**Interview**
			October 22, 2018			
	X		October 29, 2018			
	X (history for Luke)	X (Luke)	November 5, 2018			
	X (history for Elizabeth)	X (Elizabeth)	November 12, 2018			
			November, 19, 2018			
			November 26, 2018			
		X (Ms. Romano)	December 3, 2018			X (Ms. O'Neil-Jones)
1		X (Steven)	December 10, 2018			XX (Nina and Lucia)
1	XXX		December 17, 2018			
Finals			January 7, 2019			
Finals			January 14, 2019		X	
1	XXX		January 21, 2019	1	XX	

Table 4 presents a side-by-side timeline for the collection of data from the end of January 2019 through May 2019 at Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School for the interviews with students and teachers, and classroom observations. X indicates an instance of a data collection activity for the particular type of source identified in the column.

Table 4: Sequence of Data Collection at Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School January 28, 2019-May 13, 2019

Playa Vista High School				Clinton High School		
Unit	**Observation**	**Interview**	**Week of**	**Unit**	**Observation**	**Interview**
1			January 28, 2019	1	XX	
2	XXX		February 4, 2019	1	XX and X (Biology for Nina)	
2	XXX		February 11, 2019	1	XX	
2	XX		February 18, 2019	2	XX	
2	XXX		February 25, 2019	2	XX	
	X	X (Steven)	March 4, 2019	2	XX	
			March 11, 2019	2	XX	
		X (Luke)	March 18, 2019		X	X (Ms. O'Neil-Jones)
	XXX	X (Part 1 for Ms. Romano)	March 25, 2019			XX (Part 1 for Nina and Lucia)
			April 1, 2019		X	
		X (Part 2 for Ms. Romano)	April 8, 2019			
			April 15, 2019			XX (Part 2 for Nina and Lucia)
			April 22, 2019			
			April 29, 2019			
		X (Mrs. Johnson)	May 6, 2019			
			May 13, 2019			

Table 5 presents a side-by-side timeline for the collection of data from the end of October 2018 through the end of January 2019 at Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School for the planning sessions and curriculum assessments. X indicates an instance of a data collection activity for the particular type of source identified in the column.

Table 5: Sequence of Data Collection at Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School October 22, 2018 through January 21, 2019

Playa Vista High School				Clinton High School		
Unit	**Planning Session**	**Curriculum Assessment**	**Week of**	**Unit**	**Planning Session**	**Curriculum Assessment**
			October 22, 2018		XX	
			October 29, 2018			
			November 5, 2018			
			November 12, 2018			
			November, 19, 2018			
			November 26, 2018			
			December 3, 2018		X	
1	XX		December 10, 2018			
1			December 17, 2018			
Finals	X		January 7, 2019			
Finals	XX	X	January 14, 2019		X	
1			January 21, 2019	1		X

Table 6 presents a side-by-side timeline for the collection of data from the end of January 2019 through May 2019 at Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School for the planning sessions and curriculum assessments. X indicates an instance of a data collection activity for the particular type of source identified in the column.

Table 6: Sequence of Data Collection at Playa Vista High School and Clinton High School January 28, 2019-May 13, 2019

Playa Vista High School				Clinton High School		
Unit	**Planning Session**	**Curriculum Assessment**	**Week of**	**Unit**	**Planning Session**	**Curriculum Assessment**
1	X		January 28, 2019	1		X
2		X	February 4, 2019	1		X
2			February 11, 2019	1	X	X
2			February 18, 2019	2		
2			February 25, 2019	2		
		XX	March 4, 2019	2		X
		X	March 11, 2019	2		XX
			March 18, 2019			
			March 25, 2019			
			April 1, 2019			
			April 8, 2019			
			April 15, 2019			
			April 22, 2019			
			April 29, 2019			
		X	May 6, 2019			
			May 13, 2019			

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Focal Students

Questions for Phase One Only

Researcher

Hi, my name is Leslie Buffen and I am a graduate student from UC Berkeley. Thanks for helping me out. Today, I am going to ask you a few questions about reading. I am just looking for you to tell me what you learned in your class and what you think about the reading instruction in your class. Then, I will ask you about your reading interests in school and outside of school.

General Questions about Reading and Instruction

1. How have teachers or other staff members helped you to make it easier for you to read during classroom instruction? (Follow up. Ask student to rate which resource is most often used and which is most helpful.)
2. What additional resources do you use to help you read during classroom instruction? (Follow up. Ask student to rate which resource is most often used and which is most helpful.)
3. Describe the types of text you read outside of school.
4. Describe the types of text you read in school.
5. Tell me about how you like to spend your time.
6. Define close reading in your own words.
7. Do you like or dislike reading in this class? On a scale of 1-5 (1=strongly dislike and 5=strongly like) tell me about how you feel when reading in this class.
8. What strategies do you use when reading complex text?
9. What impact (if any) does reading complex text have on your motivation to read?

Questions about Literacy Practices

1. You can choose to read a lot of different things. Take a look at this list of different reading materials. If you could choose any of these, which one would you choose to read first? (A separate list that includes many types of texts is used to supplement this interview.)
    - What made you pick X first?
    - Have you actually read that before this, or did you just think you might like to read it?
    - Which one would you pick second?
    - What made you pick X second?
    - Have you actually read that before this, or did you just think you might like to read it?
    - What would be your third choice?
    - What made you pick X third?
    - Have you actually read that before this, or did you just think you might like to read it?
2. If there are other things you like to read that aren't on the list, please tell me about them.
3. What sorts of things are you best at reading?
4. Why do you read these things?
5. Where do you get the things you read?
6. Do other kids you know also read these?
7. Do people older than you read these things?
8. How do you find these materials?
9. Where do you read [insert the text named]?
10. Do you ever read [insert the text named] with other people? What kinds of people? (Advise participant not to name people but to describe relationships, types of people such as friends, siblings, relatives.)

11. How often do you read just for fun?
12. Can you give me an example [e.g., title] of something that you read for fun?
13. Why do you find it fun to read [insert the text named by the participant]?
14. What kinds of things do you read in order to help yourself or other people get things done? (probe, if necessary)

- Manuals (e.g., video games)
- Recipes
- Catalogs
- Internet web pages
- Instructions
- Bus/Bart/Train schedules
- Family mail
- Email
- Newsletters
- Newspaper

15. Do you read things together with your family members? (e.g., newspapers, TV guide, sports reports, magazines, family letters/emails, official letters)
16. How often do you go to the local library to borrow books or DVDs? With whom?
17. Do your friends have books that they share with you? What are they?
18. Do you share books with your friends? Which ones?
19. How often do you use the computer?
20. Do you use the Internet to read information about your favorite actors/heroes/sports stars/musicians?
21. Are there things you see and hear about on television that you then go and read more about those things on the Internet or in books?
22. Do you ever buy/borrow books or magazines about your favorite films or performers?
23. What kinds of computer games do you like to play?
24. Have you ever done fan fiction writing online or with friends on paper?
25. What do you know about websites or blogs?
26. Do you see yourself as a reader?
27. Do your friends and/or family members see you as someone who likes reading?

Thank you for participating in this interview process. Your answers will provide information to guide teachers as they improve their understanding of how students respond to complex text during classroom instruction.

Questions for Phase Four Only
General Questions about the Reading Units
1. Tell me about what you found interesting during the two reading units.
2. Tell me about a time when you felt excited about what you were learning during the two reading units. What were you learning about? What did your teacher do to help you stay involved?
3. Tell me about a time when you were not interested in what you were learning. Why were you not interested?
4. Tell me about a time when you did not understand something you read during the units. What about reading made it difficult to understand? How did your teacher respond?
5. Is there anything you would like your teacher to start doing in class to help you understand complex text?

6. What, if anything, do you find helpful about the reading materials your teacher gave you during class? What materials would you like to see your teacher add?
7. Overall, did you like the two reading units?
8. Do you have any other comments about the two reading units?
9. How have teachers or other staff members helped you to make it easier for you (if at all) to read during classroom instruction? (Follow up. Ask student to rate which resource is most often used and which is most helpful.)
10. What strategies do you use when reading complex text?
11. What impact (if any) does reading complex text have on your motivation to read?

Questions about Literacy Practices

1. You can choose to read a lot of different things. Take a look at this list of different reading materials. If you could choose any of these, which one would you choose to read first? (A separate list that includes many types of texts is used to supplement this interview.)
    - What made you pick X first?
    - Have you actually read that before this, or did you just think you might like to read it?
    - Which one would you pick second?
    - What made you pick X second?
    - Have you actually read that before this, or did you just think you might like to read it?
    - What would be your third choice?
    - What made you pick X third?
    - Have you actually read that before this, or did you just think you might like to read it?
2. If there are other things you like to read that aren't on the list, please tell me about them.
3. What sorts of things are you best at reading?
4. Why do you read these things?
5. Where do you get the things you read?
6. Do other kids you know also read these?
7. Do people older than you read these things?
8. How do you find these materials?
9. Where do you read [insert the text named]?
10. Do you ever read [insert the text named] with other people? What kinds of people? (Advise participant not to name people but to describe relationships, types of people such as friends, siblings, relatives.)
11. How often do you read just for fun?
12. Can you give me an example [e.g., title] of something that you read for fun?
13. Why do you find it fun to read [insert the text named by the participant]?

14. What kinds of things do you read in order to help yourself or other people get things done? (probe, if necessary)

- Manuals (e.g., video games)
- Recipes
- Catalogs
- Internet web pages
- Instructions
- Bus/Bart/Train schedules
- Family mail
- Email
- Newsletters
- Newspaper

15. Do you read things together with your family members? (e.g., newspapers, TV guide, sports reports, magazines, family letters/emails, official letters)
16. How often do you go to the local library to borrow books or DVDs? With whom?
17. Do your friends have books that they share with you? What are they?
18. Do you share books with your friends? Which ones?
19. How often do you use the computer?
20. Do you use the Internet to read information about your favorite actors/heroes/sports stars/musicians?
21. Are there things you see and hear about on television that you then go and read more about those things on the Internet or in books?
22. Do you ever buy/borrow books or magazines about your favorite films or performers?
23. What kinds of computer games do you like to play?
24. Have you ever done fan fiction writing online or with friends on paper?
25. What do you know about websites or blogs?
26. Do you see yourself as a reader?
27. Do your friends and/or family members see you as someone who likes reading?

Appendix C: Student Survey

Part 1

Directions: Read each item below. Then, select one response by deciding if the item describes a person who is like you or not like you.

	Not at all like me	Not really like me	Somewhat like me	A lot like me
1. I will not have problems understanding even the most difficult texts that we read this year.	1	2	3	4
2. I read only if I have to.	1	2	3	4
3. In comparison to my other school subjects, I am best at English/Literature.	1	2	3	4
4. I like to read about new things.	1	2	3	4
5. If the teacher discusses something interesting, I might read more about it.	1	2	3	4
6. Reading is one of my favorite hobbies.	1	2	3	4
7. I read things that are not related to school.	1	2	3	4
8. I am not particularly good at understanding the content of what I read.	1	2	3	4
9. If the subject is interesting, I can read difficult material.	1	2	3	4
10. I find it hard to finish books.	1	2	3	4

11. Finishing every reading assignment is very important to me.	1	2	3	4
12. I often talk to my friends about what I am reading.	1	2	3	4
13. I read to learn new information about topics that interest me.	1	2	3	4
14. My parents/guardians and I sometimes discuss books we are reading.	1	2	3	4
15. When I was younger, I really liked to read.	1	2	3	4
16. I enjoy a long, involved story or fiction book.	1	2	3	4
17. I read only to get information that I need.	1	2	3	4
18. I cannot sit still and read for more than a few minutes.	1	2	3	4
19. I read about my hobbies to learn more about them.	1	2	3	4
20. I usually learn difficult things by reading.	1	2	3	4
21. If something is interesting, I don't care how hard it is to read.	1	2	3	4

Part 2

Directions:

Please answer each question by circling your response.

1. My friends think I am _____.
    A. A very good reader
    B. A good reader
    C. An okay reader
    D. A poor reader
2. Reading a book is something I like to do _____.
    A. Never
    B. Not very often
    C. Sometimes
    D. Often
3. I read _____.
    A. Not as well as my friends
    B. About the same as my friends
    C. A little better than my friends
    D. A lot better than my friends
4. My best friends think reading is _____.
    A. Really fun
    B. Fun
    C. Ok to do
    D. No fun at all
5. When I come to a word I don't know, I can _____.
    A. Almost always figure it out
    B. Sometimes figure it out
    C. Almost never figure it out
    D. Never figure it out
6. I tell my friends about good books I read.
    A. I never do this
    B. I almost never do this
    C. I do this some of the time
    D. I do this a lot
7. When I am reading by myself, I understand _____.
    A. Almost everything I read
    B. Some of what I read
    C. Almost none of what I read
    D. None of what I read
8. People who read a lot are _____.
    A. Very interesting
    B. Interesting
    C. Not very interesting
    D. Boring

9. I am _____.
    A. A poor reader
    B. An okay reader
    C. A good reader
    D. A very good reader
10. I think libraries are _____.
    A. A great place to spend time
    B. An interesting place to spend time
    C. An okay place to spend time
    D. A boring place to spend time
11. I worry about what other kids think about my reading _____.
    A. Every day
    B. Almost every day
    C. Once in a while
    D. Never
12. Knowing how to read well is _____.
    A. Not very important
    B. Sort of important
    C. Important
    D. Very important
13. When my teachers ask me a question about what I have read, I _____.
    A. Can never think of an answer
    B. Have trouble thinking of an answer
    C. Sometimes think of an answer
    D. Always think of an answer
14. I think reading is _____.
    A. A boring way to spend time
    B. An okay way to spend time
    C. An interesting way to spend time
    D. A great way to spend time
15. Reading is _____.
    A. Very easy for me
    B. Kind of easy for me
    C. Kind of hard for me
    D. Very hard for me
16. As an adult I will spend _____.
    A. None of my time reading
    B. Very little of my time reading
    C. Some of my time reading
    D. A lot of my time reading
17. When I am in a group talking about what we are reading, I _____.
    A. Almost never talk about my ideas
    B. Sometimes talk about my ideas
    C. Almost always talk about my ideas
    D. Always talk about my ideas

18. I would like for my teachers to read aloud in my classes _____.
    A. Every day
    B. Almost every day
    C. Once in a while
    D. Never
19. When I read out loud, I am a _____.
    A. Poor reader
    B. Okay reader
    C. Good reader
    D. Very good reader
20. When someone gives me a book for a present, I feel _____.
    A. Very happy
    B. Sort of happy
    C. Sort of unhappy
    D. Unhappy

Part 3

Directions: Please write your response in the space provided after each question.

1. What are some of your favorite books?
2. Who are some of your favorite authors?
3. What are some of your favorite websites?
4. What do you know a lot about? (e.g., bikes, food, comics, or technology)
5. If you were going to teach someone something, what would you teach?
6. How do you like to spend free time?

Appendix D: Teacher Survey

Directions:
Please write your answer to the following questions in the space provided.

1. How long have you been teaching?

2. What is the highest level of education you have attained?

3. What was the area of study for your bachelor's degree?

4. What was the area of study for your master's degree? If you have multiple degrees, list all of them.

5. Describe professional development sessions you have attended that have been influential on your practice as a teacher. If possible, please be specific about the presenter(s), the content of the session, and the materials used.

Appendix E: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Focal Teachers

Before the Pre-Interview

Thank you for meeting with me for a pre-interview. The interview should last approximately thirty minutes and will be audio recorded.

I will ask you a series of questions. I will also ask you about a close reading lesson you have taught in the past or would like to teach. Feel free to bring a copy of the lesson plan to the interview if you think it would be helpful to reference.

You are welcome to stop the interview at any time or skip any questions that you do not want to answer.

Pre-Interview Questions

1. Let's discuss your class. What similarities and differences do you see among your students?
2. Let's discuss what close reading means.
3. Tell me about what literacy means to you. Tell me about what reading comprehension and fluency means to you.
4. Tell me about what you have done in the past to support students' literacy development.
5. Tell me about the text that you typically teach in your class.
6. Tell me about the text your students typically read in other classes and outside of school.
7. Let's discuss an effective lesson that you have taught or would like to teach that supported students who have Individualized Education Plans with the close reading of complex text.

(Possible Follow-up Questions)

- Tell me about the context for the lesson
- Tell me about the objectives for learning in this lesson
- Tell me about the materials you included in your lesson
- Tell me about the activities the lesson included
- Tell me about the evidence you have that students met the objectives for the lesson
- Tell me about how you initiated and maintained student engagement during the lesson

Before the Post-Interview

Thank you for meeting with me for a post-interview. The interview should last approximately thirty minutes and will be audio recorded.

I will ask you a series of questions. I will also ask you about a close reading lesson you have taught in the past or would like to teach. Feel free to bring a copy of the lesson plan to the interview if you think it would be helpful to reference.

You are welcome to stop the interview at any time or skip any questions that you do not want to answer.

Post-Interview Questions

1. During the two reading units, when (if at all) did you adjust instruction and make responsive moves during the middle of the unit?

2. Describe an effective lesson that you have taught or would like to teach that supported students who have Individualized Education Plans with the close reading of complex text. (Possible Follow-up Questions)

- Tell me about the context for the lesson
- Tell me about the objectives for learning in this lesson
- Tell me about the materials you included in your lesson
- Tell me about the activities the lesson included
- Tell me about the evidence you have that students met the objectives for the lesson
- Tell me about how you initiated and maintained student engagement during the lesson